

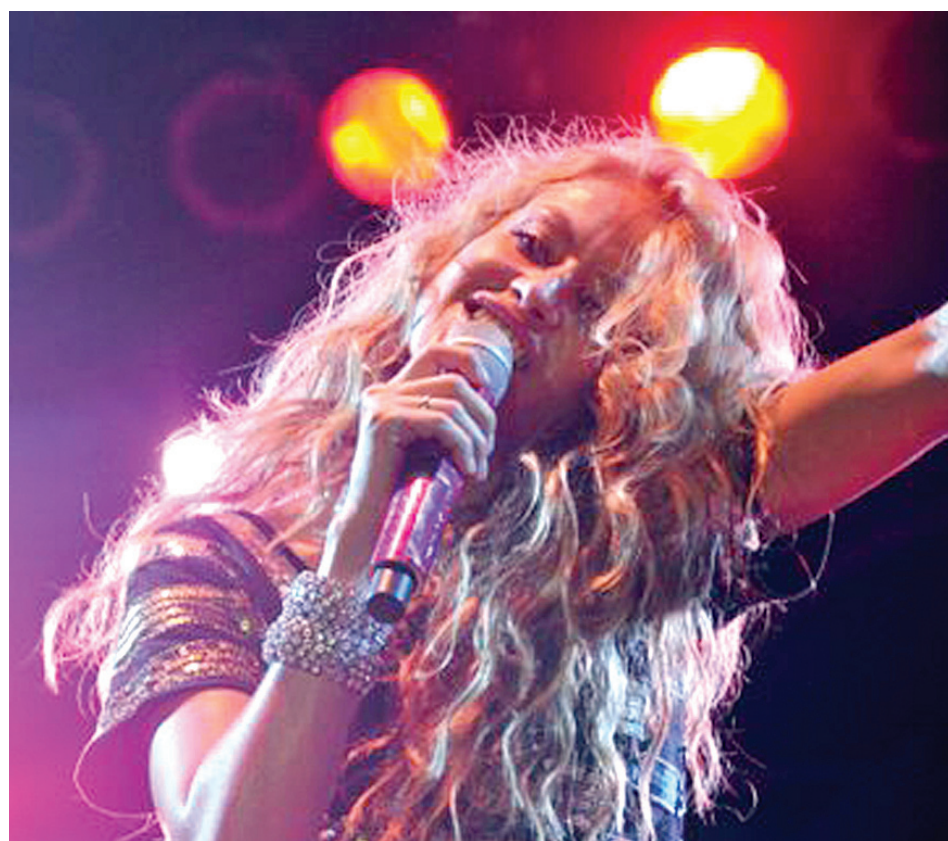
Aruba Music Festival 2009 host great performances



ORANJESTAD - Aruba was excited to have Fonseca and Paulina Rubio join the Aruba Music Festival together with legendary artists from Earth, Wind and Fire.

Paulina Rubio is one of the top-selling female Latin pop artists with over 20 million records sold worldwide. Paulina, dubbed "La Chica Dorada" (The Golden Girl), is preparing to take the globe by storm yet again with the release of her ninth album, *Gran City Pop*, due out on June 23rd. Raised in Mexico, Los Angeles, and Spain, she began her wildly successful career at the young age of 10 with the Mexican girl group "Timbiriche," and thereafter decided to go her own way.

Continued on Page 8



In Grenada

Sharine Ignacio wins 3 titles in the CAC Bodybuilding Fitness Championship



ORANJESTAD – Aruba Bodybuilding and Powerlifting Association represented Aruba in Grenada at the CAC Bodybuilding Fitness Championship. The CAC Body Building Fitness Championship is an event that is organized every

year.

At this event Sharine Ignacio managed to conquer three prizes: 1st place Mixed Pairs, 3rd place Women's Body building and 5th Place Women's Master.

Next year, 2010, Aruba was chosen to be the host of the



CAC Body Building Fitness Championship.

In the pictures Sharine Ignacio showing off her prizes. □

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The UltimateBet.com Charity Event raises funds for local Children's Home



Palm Beach -- The UltimateBet.com Charity Event unfolded at the Radisson Aruba Resort Casino & Spa. It was extremely successful, reports Fransisca van Esta Tjallingii, Asst. Manager of Catering & Convention Services. A total of \$18,220.00 was raised for for Imeldahof Children's home, with \$11,700 earned at the

event, \$ 5,000 donated by UltimateBet.com and \$1,520 paid by the winners who gave generously part of their earnings dedicated to an excellent cause. The cheque will be presented to Imeldahof Children's Home during Sunday's final banquet when the poker tournament wraps up it current Aruba event. □



AreTheseUtz Chops Ultimate Bet Aruba Poker Classic



Brandon Hall



Matt Ross



Robert Mizrachi

On Saturday night, Brandon AreTheseUtz Hall (pictured at right) became the champion of the 2009 Ultimate Bet Aruba Poker Classic, defeating a field of 475 entrants. Hall was one of four members of the PocketFives.com online poker community to make the final table and chopped heads-up with Robert Mizrachi, brother of Michael "The Grinder" Mizrachi. Rain plagued the final table, but you won't hear any complaints from Hall. Let's take a look back at the final table of the Ultimate Bet Aruba Poker Classic.

Matt_cwp394_Ross (pictured at left) was the first player eliminated from the seven-handed feature table. Ross shoved pre-flop with pocket sevens and received a call from Jose Santos, who held A-K. The door card and river both came aces, giving Santos trips and sending Ross, donning a Boston Celtics jersey, to the exits \$41,000 richer for his wear. Eliminated in sixth place was Brock t soprano Parker, who 5bet all-in for his last 1.1 million chips with A-K of hearts. Eric basebaldy Baldwin made the call, turning over pocket queens for a race. The board came 2-2-6-8-10 and Parker was ousted.

Santos was eliminated in fifth place after calling all-in for

his tournament life on a board of 3-K-5-4-K. His opponent, Chase Steely, turned over 6-7 for the nut straight and Santos promptly mucked, earning \$92,000 for his fifth place showing. The hand vaulted Steely to the top of the chip counts. The next to go was Baldwin, who shoved pre-flop over the top of a raise by Mizrachi with A-Q. Mizrachi made the call and tabled A-7, dominated by Baldwin's hole cards. However, the flop came seven-high, sending Mizrachi into the lead in the hand for good after delivering his three-outer.

Steely busted from the Ultimate Bet Aruba Poker Classic in third place, earning \$218,000. Like Baldwin, Steely pushed over the top of a raise by Mizrachi pre-flop and Mizrachi made the call. Steely showed pocket queens, while Mizrachi flipped up K-J, noting before he made the call that he thought he was 40% to win the hand. The flop came A-10-9, giving Mizrachi a gutshot straight draw, but the turn came the deuce of clubs. Then, pandemonium struck, as one of the two remaining queens in the deck hit the river, giving Steely a set, but improving Mizrachi to a straight. The hand gave

Mizrachi a 3:2 chip edge entering heads-up play against Hall.

Coverage found on Poker News noted that, after Hall went into the lead with 3.7 million chips to Mizrachi's 3.3 million, the two players struck a deal, which had been talked about for quite some time. Each received the \$414,000 second place prize plus a percentage of the remaining purse based on their chip count. In addition, the two played on for \$30,000. Fifteen minutes after the deal was inked, Mizrachi (pictured at right) pushed all-in holding 9-6 after a flop of 8-9-2. Hall called with J-10 for a straight draw and the river came a queen, crowning the PocketFives.com member the newest champion of the Ultimate Bet Aruba Poker Classic.

Here were the official results of the 2009 Ultimate Bet Aruba Poker Classic, which do not reflect the amount of the heads-up chip between Hall and Mizrachi:

1st Place: Brandon AreTheseUtz Hall - \$753,330
2nd Place: Robert Mizrachi - \$414,680
3rd Place: Chase Steely - \$218,860
4th Place: Eric basebaldy Baldwin - \$126,710

Others who cashed included:

9th Place: Johnjohnboiprodigy
Clancy - \$29,950
15th Place: Brent Astrolux85
Roberts - \$18,430
16th Place: Travis
TravestyFund Rice - \$18,430
17th Place: Ty dabears87
Reiman - \$18,430
19th Place: Larry BBOY3110
Sharp - \$16,130
22nd Place: Scott yaboystu
Stewart - \$16,130
26th Place: Kevin Shumoney
Kaikko - \$13,820
27th Place: Matt Plattsburgh
Vengrin - \$13,820
28th Place: Jamie pokerjammers
Armstrong - \$13,820
32nd Place: Ryan
papaGEORGIOOO Caldwell
- \$11,520
36th Place: ZachCrazyZachary
Clark - \$11,520

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Aruba and Bonaire have won all the prizes in the micro boat division: the Microboat C winners were 1. Elvis Kock (Dushi Yu I) of Aruba; 2. Tino Thielman (Whitestone) of Bonaire and Rudolpho St. Jago (Top Gun) of Aruba.

The Micro boats B champions were Jenaldo Domacasse of Bonaire with Joselle, Mariela Kock with GC from Aruba and Patrick Domacasse with the Linda from Aruba. The A category was dominated by

Miguel Barera (Black Hog) from Aruba, the Samantha Domacasse of Bonaire (with Samantha) and Le-Roy Winklaar from Bonaire came in third. Pabien!

The Tranquilo wins the Lac Bay Race with a smile.

The Tranquilo from Aruba won the Lac Bay Race. Anthony Hagedoorn and crew sailed only this race on their yacht in the Racing Cruising I class, going for the gold. As Anthony proclaimed with



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a laugh: "The Lac Bay race is synonymous for Tranquilo."

The Aruban captain experienced an incident with his engine on the trip to Bonaire: he suffered a fire which debilitated his chances to race. Therefore he and his crew members crewed on the yachts of colleagues. They had a fantastic time anyway! □



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AirTran Adds Aruba Flights



It's official -- AirTran is launching service between Aruba and Atlanta and Orlando, with Saturday nonstops from Atlanta starting on Dec. 19 and launching from Orlando on Feb. 13, 2010. Aruba is the fifth announced Caribbean destination for

AirTran, which also flies to Cancun and San Juan and will begin service to Nassau on Dec. 17 and to Montego Bay on Feb. 11. The airline plans to serve the latter destinations with nonstops from Atlanta, Baltimore/Washington, and Orlando. □

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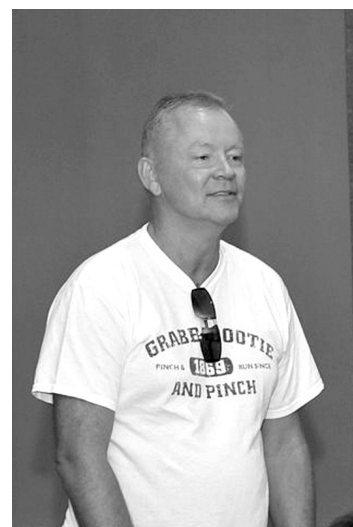
Earth, Wind and Fire at the Westin Resort



PALM BEACH - Earth, Wind and Fire gave a meet and great with the local and international press on Saturday afternoon in the ball room of the Aruba Westin Resort and Casino. Earth, Wind & Fire is simply one of the most important, innovative, and celebrated contemporary Pop/R&B music forces of the 20th century. The

band has had a remarkable career spanning over four decades with accolades, awards and record-breaking achievements. Earth, Wind & Fire's signature sound is not easily categorized and since its inception has been profoundly influential...musically, socially, and spiritually. The musical vision has fused

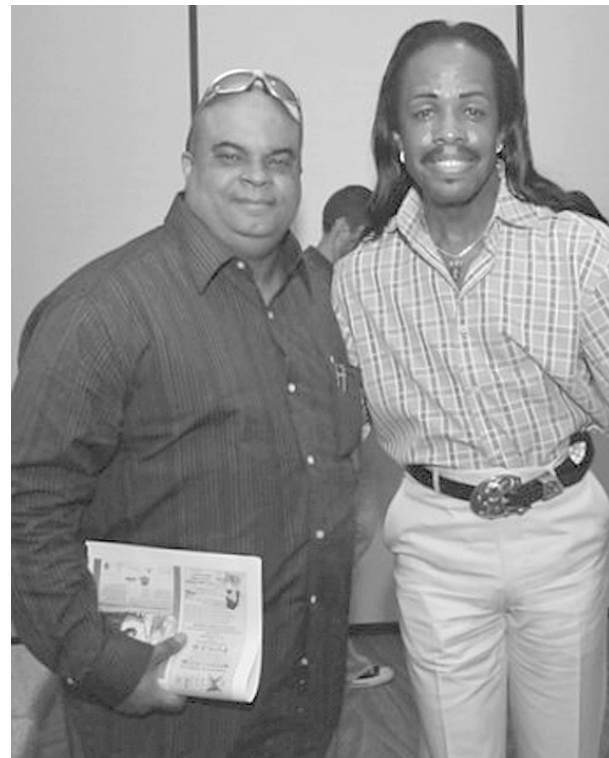
Pop, R&B, Rock, Latin, Funk, Jazz, and African Music into one unique sound. Successfully breaking all musical genre boundaries with 23 albums, Earth, Wind & Fire have recorded eight #1 R&B singles and eight Double Platinum Top 10 Pop Albums over their career. Earth, Wind & Fire have received 20 Grammy Award nominations and have won six awards as a group; additionally its founding members individually (Maurice White & Philip Bailey) have each won two, totaling eight Grammy Awards. In 2004, Earth, Wind & Fire received the National Academy of Recording Arts & Sciences (N.A.R.A.S.) Signature Governor's Award. They have earned more than 50 Gold and Platinum albums and have sold over 90 million



albums worldwide earning them a place on the list of best selling music artists of all time. VH1 ranked Earth, Wind & Fire number 60 on their list of the 100 Greatest Artists of Rock & Roll. Rolling Stone Magazine declared the group "changed the sound of black pop." President Obama invited Earth, Wind & Fire to perform in the East Room at the White House for the first social event of the new administration. Earth, Wind & Fire made international news when President Obama declared in an interview with Rolling Stone Magazine that the group was among his favorites. He said they are "rhythm and blues and pop staples for me." Earth, Wind & Fire's career achievements have been acknowledged and earned them their place in musical history. Earth, Wind & Fire have been inducted into Rock and Roll Hall of Fame (2000); they have received a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame (1995) and Hollywood's Rockwalk (2003). That same

year they received the Vocal Group Hall of Fame Award (2003). The music industry and fans have bestowed Lifetime Achievement honors from ASCAP (Rhythm & Soul Heritage Award - 2002), NAACP (Hall of Fame - 1994) and the BET Awards (Life Time Achievement Award 2002). Two Earth, Wind & Fire classic songs have been inducted into the Grammy Hall of Fame: "That's The Way of The World" (2004) and "Shining Star" (2007). Earth, Wind & Fire have 12 American Music Awards nominations and four awards and the group received the Entertainer Award at the 2009 TV Land Awards. Earth, Wind & Fire are the first African-American performers to sell out Madison Square Garden and to receive the MSG Gold Ticket Award. Earth, Wind & Fire is the first African-American group to receive the Columbia Records Crystal Globe Award for selling the most albums internationally. □

~ Photos by Julia Renfro ~



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PALM BEACH – The health and calorie conscious among us need fear steakhouses no more. Whether it's a low-carb, low-fat, or even vegetarian diet you follow, Texas de Brazil Churrascaria fits into just about every dieter's menu plan.

Low carb eaters will have all their expectations surpassed with a tempting carnivorous selection of umpteen cuts of sizzling beef, pork, lamb, sausage, and poultry. The meats are prepared in the healthiest style of cooking—slow roasting—where much of the fat drips off in the roasting process, so those looking for a lower fat option to sautéing, pan frying, or deep frying will also be able to indulge.

The Brazilian-style steakhouse also offers a garden full of healthy eats on a lavish 40-item seasonal salad bar, giving dieters plenty to choose from to accompany the

slow-roasted meats. A selection of fresh lettuces and vegetables may be standard for most salad bars, but Texas de Brazil's version goes a gourmet twist further, treating the palate to additional items like marinated portabella mushrooms, sweet roasted bell peppers, hearts of palm, sundried tomatoes, imported cheeses—including fresh buffalo mozzarella—sushi, home-made soups, and much more.

The salad bar is included in the continuous service meal with unlimited choices from the grilled meats, but for vegetarians or the non-meat eaters, a special price is offered for just the salad bar. Of course, for those looking to splurge while on vacation, Texas de Brazil will gladly serve their garlic mashed potatoes, traditional fried plantains, and their world-famous parmesan cheese bread as part of the meal.

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PALM BEACH - Fresher than fresh, is the motto of the popular Bugaloe Beach Bar & Grill at De Palm Pier. Caught in the morning, served at night... That's the Bugaloe way!

Jumbled Chef Marc Hernandez is proudly presenting his rich platter with an 18oz Red Snapper or Grouper, a choice depending on the catch of that day. "Bugaloe is known for fun and craziness, so it was just a logical step for me to go crazy with this colorful pallet

of exquisite fish, yellow rice and rich vegetables," Chef Marc says. With a smile he adds "And that just for US\$ 20!"

And right he is, as the platter has been a hit from the start. Served with a bottle of white wine this fish feast is truly a delight on your Monday night.

Bugaloe is located at
De Palm Pier in
Palm Beach between
RIU Palace and
Radisson Resort.



SALSA WORKSHOP

Always wanted to learn how to dance Salsa? Well, you will get your chance on Wednesday evening. Reggie and Sabine from ArubaSalsa will show you the moves of Latin

dancing. You will learn how to dance Salsa and Merengue in one hour. The FREE workshop starts at 7:30pm. The popular Salsa live band "PM" will take care of the swinging Latin tunes. Fun guaranteed!

LIVE MUSIC @ BUGALOE

Tuesday 6-9pm: JOYRIDE
Wednesday 7-11pm: PM Band
Friday 6-10pm: PM Band
Friday 10pm - 12am: DJ Jeroen
Sunday 6-9pm: MARISELA & Aquerius



OPENING HOURS

Bugaloe Beach Bar and Grill is open daily from 8am till midnight. You may go there for a casual lunch or dinner and on Mondays the special is served from 5:30pm till 10:00pm. Reservations are not needed... just follow the good music, the fun and the smiles on the beach and you will know where Bugaloe is.

J. E. Irausquin Blvd 79 at De Palm Pier • Tel: (297) 5862233 • Website: www.bugaloe.com • Email: info@bugaloe.com

Aruba Music Festival 2009 host great performances



Continued from Front Page

Paulina's eponymous solo album shifted over 3 million records worldwide and garnered her a Grammy nomination for Best Latin Artist in addition to three Latin Grammy nominations, as well as a Billboard award for Best Latin Album and two Premio Lo Nuestro awards for Best Pop Album and Best Female Pop Star. With this record,

Paulina's remarkable sales yielded: Triple Platinum and Diamond sales in Columbia, Chile, Peru, Ecuador, Venezuela, Spain, and Italy. Her album Pau-Latina further cemented her place as she became the highest selling female Latin artist of 2004. That year, Paulina won several Billboard, Premios Juventud and Premio Lo Nuestro awards and was the only



Latina nominated at the 47th Grammy Awards. The year after, Paulina became the first female host at the MTV Latin America Video Awards and was also invited to perform at the Nobel Award Ceremony in 2006. Paulina then released the most successful album-to-date of her career, Ananda, which entered the Billboard 200 chart at #31. The single "Ni Una Sola Palabra" also found a home on the charts and won a Latin Billboard Award.

The eagerly anticipated Gran City Pop already hit #1 as a pre-sale on iTunes Latino and consists of 10 tracks. Her latest single, "Causa y Efecto," debuted on television at the 2009 Billboard Latin Music Awards and was a radio hit upon its release, quickly climbing the charts. In parallel, Paulina is launching "ORO," her first fragrance, in collaboration with Oracle Beauty Brands.

Fonseca's EMI Latin United States debut Corazon is amongst the most impressive releases in recent Latin music, instantly garnering three Latin Grammy nominations, four Latin Billboard Nominations, two MTV Latin America Music Award nominations and four Premio Lo Nuestro nominations (at which he also performed).

From these nominations, Fonseca took home a Latin Grammy for Best Tropical Song of the Year, a Latin Billboard Award for Tropical Album of the Year, a MTV Music Award for Best New Central Artist, and a Premio Lo Nuestro for Best New Artist.

In 2008, Fonseca was nominated for two Premio Lo Nuestro Awards for Tropical Mail Artist of the Year and Tropical Traditional Artist of the Year. He released his highly-anticipated sophomore album Gratiitud and first hit single "Enredame" which was #1 in Columbia for nine consecutive weeks.

Most recently, his second single "Arroyito" was released and within two weeks hit the #1 spot in Columbia.

By staying true to his native Colombian rhythms and fusing



pop/rock, Fonseca manages to straddle and dominate both the Pop and Tropical charts, uniquely positioning him as both a Pop and Tropical star. Fonseca's album and mega hit Te Mando Flores reached top 10 spots on the Latin Album, Pop, Tropical, and Hot Latin Tracks charts. Over a year past its release, Te Mando Flores is still on significant

rotation at radio stations. His follow-up hit single "Hance Tiempo" also slated both the Latin Pop and Tropical Airplay charts. Fonseca has additionally shared the stage with fellow Colombian luminaries Juanes at Campin Stadium in Bogota and Shakira in her home town of Baranquilla. □

~ Photos by Julia Renfro ~



The French Steakhouse delivers dining under the stars

Eagle Beach – The French Steakhouse at the Manchebo Beach Resort & Spa just added another charming dining option, a tropical outdoor courtyard, featuring delicious cuisine under the stars. The famed French Steakhouse prides itself on the elegant dining experience it offers patrons in the fully air-conditioned dining room. Yet recently the idea of adding a garden spot to the existing blueprint began to sprout in the creative mind of Executive Chef George Hoek, and he immediately recruited

the landscapers to create the intimate, lovely setting. The French Steakhouse Ooh-La-La menu is now served indoor and alfresco, featuring creative appetizers, soups, salads, seafood dishes, poultry and the Pièce de Résistance South American & USDA Beef specialties. Among popular appetizers the chef's Tropical Crab Cakes with pineapple & mango salsa and the Teriyaki Glazed Seared Duck Breast, served with garden greens and balsamic dressing are real crowd pleasers.



True to the restaurant's French roots, the Onion Soup is a classic, while the Honey Glazed Salmon Salad winks at the exotic East with a sweet soy dressing. The menu features a great variety of seafood dishes from fresh fish to the totally sinful and amazingly-decadent Caribbean Stuffed Shrimp with Crabmeat and Bacon, which became an instant hit. The tequila and sweet chili glaze, lends the Jumbo shrimp a pure taste of heaven!

The French Steakhouse is naturally famous for the South American Churrasco steak, a signature preparation, which now shares the stage with juicy USDA beef specialties such as NY Sirloin and Filet Mignon. Light-eaters will find the Jerk Chicken Skewers and the Lemon Herb Broilers very satisfying. Open seven days a week from 5:30 p.m. - 11:00 p.m. the French Steakhouse is blessed with the nicest staff and a delightfully renovated dining

room with sparkling China, crisp linen, an interesting bread basket, colossal desserts and live jazz on piano with Eddy Samson who is Aruba's best entertainer, and a walking & breathing music encyclopedia, just whistle the tune, and Eddy will produce a symphonic version of your favorite song. Hungry patrons will appreciate the Ambassador's 5-course menu featuring the run of the menu highlights for just \$34.95 per person. www.manchebo.com/steakhouse



Giorgio's Ristorante Italiano introduces Menu Turistico



Eagle Beach -- Giorgio's Ristorante Italiano located at the heart of the low-rise hotels at the Manchebo Beach Resort & Spa, delivers authentic Mediterranean flavors, at a reasonable price. The restaurant has just introduced Menu Turistico a three-course dinner featuring appetizers, main courses and desserts for just \$19.95, per person, plus 15% service charge. Patrons may choose between home made soup and Caesar salad, Fettuccini Alfredo, Lasagna Casarecia, Spaghetti alla Bolognese or any favorite pizza with Tiramisu, Cheese Cake or Ice Cream for the sweet finale. Posing with Angelo the Italian maitre D' at Giorgio's, Mr and Mrs. Klaus, from Pennsylvania, 2nd time repeaters in Aruba at the Manchebo, the trip was a birthday present from him to her and since they are celebrating their 40th anniversary in November, they are already thinking about coming back, they enjoyed Menu Turistico and recommend it wholeheartedly! □

Pega Pega Café & Beach Bar reinvents Beach Cuisine



Eagle Beach – Pega Pega Café & Beach Bar at the Manchebo Beach Resort & Spa deserves recognition as the home of Beach Cuisine. Executive Chef George Hoek and his culinary team serve a Sun Splashed menu on the ocean front terrace,

raising the bar to a must-visit, must-try status. The contemporary menu, lists many favorite dishes from around the world, borrowing inspiration from US, Mexican, Thai, Jamaican, Cuban, Greek and Mediterranean kitchens, all served with a tropical, Caribbean flair. From Sun-Sational Salads, to Cuban pressed jawbreakers and wraps, mid-day platters also include oversize Beef Burgers, Philly Cheese Steak Sandwiches and Hot Dogs. The Pega Pega tropical &

frozen cocktail list, with fresh fruit or ice cream smoothies, daiquiris, coladas and margaritas, leaves nothing out, including Yellow Birds, Sex on the Beach and Mudslides, making a lunch-time brain-freeze, extremely easy to get! The Pega Pega, one of Aruba's oldest beach bars is open on fabulous Eagle Beach, with unrivaled views, caring, gracious service, and relaxed atmosphere, from 12 noon to 5 p.m. The bar opens at 11 a.m. to 11 p.m. □



Butterfly Farm attraction shut down



The Butterfly Farm of Grand Cayman is now closed as a result of a decline in Tourism. The indigenous Butterfly population will be released into the natural environment while the imported livestock will live out their days over the next two weeks within the confines of the facility.

BY Kevin Shereves

Businesses in the Cayman Islands are affected more than ever due to the slowdown in Cayman's tourism industry and

the latest to feel the economic pinch is the popular tourist attraction the Butterfly Farm, which has been forced to close its doors.

Part owner of the Butterfly Farm, Tony Cox, attributes the closure of the Farm to a lack of tourists visiting the facility.

He also noted that the recession as well as the heavy costs of rebuilding of the sanctuary after damage caused by Hurricane Ivan are some of the main reasons behind the troubles facing the Farm.

The Farm consists of large mesh structures designed to feel like a lush tropical rain forest amidst flowers and trees, ponds and a trickling waterfall with butterflies flying overhead and all around.

Within large meshed enclosures visitors could get the chance to see hundreds of exotic butterflies flying freely, with dozens of the most spectacular species from all over the world.

"This is heartbreaking to me, this is my life," Mr Cox said. "The Butterfly Farm means everything to me."

Mr Cox said that he was trying unbelievably hard to keep the Butterfly Farm going, and is currently working with Boatswain's Beach in an attempt to secure a new home for the Butterfly Farm.

He expressed the belief that the attraction could be viable if it were relocated.

"There are a number of options still available to us. We are losing money at our current site and at this point we are working on relocating the Butterfly Farm. Boatswain's Beach is still an option but it is a long process.

"There are a full range of choices to make right now. There are a number of parties who want to work with us and we are very committed to the Butterfly Farm remaining in Grand Cayman," he said.

The Farm previously attracted a high number of visitors eager to have a break from the sun, sea, sand and shopping itinerary of the standard Caribbean holiday. It was also a favourite with photographers.

The Grand Cayman location is one of four such farms operated by Mr Cox; the other three are located in Aruba, St Martin and St Thomas.

"This year we are having our best year ever in those locations, because tourism is the primary industry on those islands and occupancy is usually close to

100 percent in Aruba," Mr Cox said, adding that the tourism outlook for Cayman is pretty grim.

"Our model is the same in all four locations, but in Grand Cayman tourism is experiencing a major blow."

He said the government is also experiencing a serious financial problem and at this time he was unsure if they were in a position to help the farm.

Erin Gray, who has worked as a tour guide at the Butterfly Farm for five years, says the closure has been very devastating.

"We are like a family and it is very sad that it has come to this," she said.

Ms Gray said that the indigenous Cayman butterflies will be released and will live out the rest of their days in a natural environment. Meanwhile, the exotic imported butterflies will live out their full life span within the enclosure. This should take no longer than two weeks Ms Gray said, as the life span of butterflies is very short.

"We have not received a shipment of cocoons (or pupae) over the past two weeks and thus our breeding programme has stopped. Within the next week or two most of the exotic butterflies will have lived out their lifespan within the confines of the Butterfly Farm." The Butterfly Farm opened in Grand Cayman on 14 February 2003 on Lawrence Blvd. across from the old Marquee cinema

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Tapas & Charcoal Grill

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Want Leaner Kids? Parents May Need to Toe the Line

It's a trend that has health experts worried: Young kids are becoming increasingly oversized -- leading, they fear, to overweight teens and, ultimately, overweight adults with health problems.

But parents could be poised to do something about this. After all, some experts contend, parents are part of the problem.

"Parents might be contributing to the overweight epidemic," said Dr. Elsie Taveras, an assistant professor of pediatrics at Harvard Pilgrim Health Care and Harvard Medical School, who has researched the issue.

They do so unwittingly, of course, Taveras said. And the point is not to make parents feel guilty about contributing to their children's weight problems, she said, but to get the word out because the trend is headed in the wrong direction.

Today in the United States, infants up to 6 months old are 59 percent more likely to be overweight than were babies 20 years ago, according to a study published in *Obesity*.

In her research, Taveras discovered that infants who gain weight quickly early in life face weight problems by the time they're toddlers.

"What we found was, those children who gained more weight and gained it more quickly in the first six months of life had a higher risk of obesity when they were 3 years old," Taveras said. Her study was reported in *Pediatrics*.

The way parents feed their infants might play a role in this weight gain, another study found.

John Worobey, a professor and chairman of the nutritional sciences department at Rutgers University in New Jersey, evaluated the behavior of mothers as they fed their babies. His team followed 96 mother-child pairs, asking the mothers questions -- such as what they did when their babies got fussy -- and watching them feed their children formula.

Mothers who fed their babies eight times a day, on average, rather than seven and "who were less sensitive in reading their baby's satiety cues," Worobey said, had babies who gained more weight between ages 6 and 12 months. The findings were reported in the *Journal of Nutrition Education and Behavior*. One solution, he said, is for parents to pay closer attention to their baby's cues, asking their pediatrician for help if they aren't certain how to read those cues.

"Pulling the head away from the bottle is the

infant's way to signal, 'Hey, I don't want to do this anymore,'" Worobey said. But the cue is often not noticed.

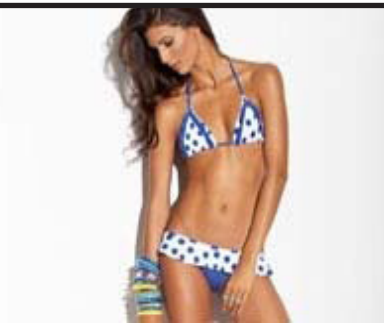
One way to remedy that, he suggests, is for parents to avoid feeding their infants while watching television. "You may be paying more attention to the TV," he said. "It's better to make it one-on-one time."

There could be cultural myths at work, too, he said, with some cultures still believing that a chubby baby is a healthy baby.

Taveras urged parents to check in often about weight with their infant's pediatrician. With about four "well-baby" visits in the first six months, parents should remember to ask each time about their child's weight. "They should discuss with their clinician how their child is growing," she said.

But the parental link to youngsters' weight might start well before birth, perhaps even before pregnancy.

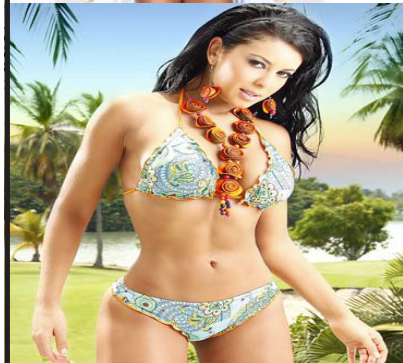
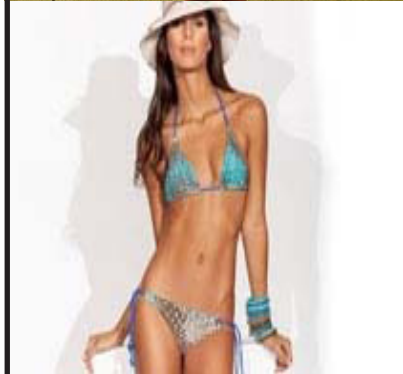
Reporting in the *Maternal and Child Health Journal*, researchers found that women who start pregnancy at a normal weight but gain more than 25 to 35 pounds increase their child's risk for being overweight at age 3. □



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For stocks, it's all about earnings in the week ahead



Traders gather at the Bank of America kiosk on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange September 24, 2009, for the initial public offering (IPO) of Artio Global Investors Inc.

By Rodrigo Campos

NEW YORK (Reuters) – The stock market is set to continue its winning ways in the coming week as momentum builds during earnings season.

The latest quarterly reporting period is off to a strong start, but this week will be crucial to hopes that revenue growth has returned triumphant, as opposed to earnings surprises resulting mostly from cost-cutting.

Six Dow components and some of the biggest banks are in line for scorecard reporting. This time last quarter, during the first full week after Alcoa's results, the Standard & Poor's 500 index (.SPX) rose 7 percent to close at 940.38 on Friday, July 17. It has not had a better week since, but if earnings continue the trend established by early results, investors may keep buying stocks.

"There's enough room for

REUTERS/Brendan McDermid upward movement," said Kim Caughey, senior equity research analyst at Fort Pitt Capital Group in Pittsburgh. "Not another 60 percent, but still."

Expectations of economic recovery have fueled a nearly 60 percent gain in stocks since the doomsday levels of early March. On Friday, the Dow Jones industrial average (.DJI) hit a fresh 2009 closing high at 9,864.94, while the S&P 500 ended at 1,071.49 and the Nasdaq finished at 2,139.28. For the week, the Dow was up 4 percent, while both the S&P 500 and the Nasdaq advanced 4.5 percent.

But such a breathtaking rally has some analysts wondering if the stock market has too much good news priced in. Analysts' expectations are loftier this time around, removing one of the catalysts that buoyed the market in the last two periods.

"The concern is heightened by the fact that analysts have been revising estimates up at one of the most aggressive paces in over a year," said Carmine Grigoli, chief U.S. investment strategist at the equity division of Mizuho Securities USA Inc in New York.

"This was not the case in the last two earnings reporting seasons, when the market did so well." Despite the revisions in various sectors, earnings are expected to fall more than 25 percent compared to a year ago, according to data compiled by Thomson Reuters. Arguably, the bar is still set low, even if people have already factored this into projections.

Earnings "should support the market averages where they are and maybe give a minor boost," said Fred Dickson, market strategist and director of retail research at D.A. Davidson & Co in Lake Oswego, Oregon.

BEVY OF BLUE CHIPS

Some of the big corporate names scheduled to post earnings this week are Intel Corp (INTC.O) and Johnson & Johnson (JNJ.N) on Tuesday, JPMorgan Chase & Co (JPM.N) on Wednesday, Goldman Sachs (GS.N) and IBM (IBM.N) on Thursday and Bank of America (BAC.N) and General Electric (GE.N) on Friday.

Investors will be watching to see if IBM and Intel benefit from the weak dollar; the companies garner substantial revenue from overseas. IBM

is expected to post earnings of \$2.38 per share on revenue of \$23.38 billion, while Intel is forecast to earn 27 cents a share on \$9.015 billion of revenue, according to Thomson Reuters I/B/E/S data.

Goldman is one of the financial titans reporting earnings this week. The banking giant has continued to increase its profits even in tough times, so the others, particularly Bank of America, are better bellwethers for the market. Financials are projected for a 57 percent increase in earnings from the year-ago period, when Lehman Brothers imploded. "Banks are always important," Grigoli said, "and investors will be looking for signs about loan losses and how fast they are escalating -- and whether profits from banks' traditional business are able to offset those losses."

The hope is that upside surprises for banks and the broader market will come from improvement in revenues and not just cost cutting, Citigroup's chief U.S. equity strategist Tobias Levkovich said in a recent note.

WEAK DOLLAR AND TAME CPI

Another key driver for the stock market this week, as in recent ones, will be the U.S. dollar. Its weakness (both perceived and real) boosted the prices of materials, leading in turn to a jump in commodity-related stocks and sector indexes.

Key economic indicators are also on tap.

September retail sales are due on Wednesday, with an expectation for a 2.1 percent drop, according to economists polled in a Reuters survey. But data last Thursday showed same-store sales for September rose for the first time in more than a year, and the market could get an extra boost if retailers keep up the positive news.

Minutes from the Federal Open Market Committee's September meeting will be released on Wednesday at 2 p.m. (1800 GMT).

The overall Consumer Price Index for September, due on Thursday, is expected to show a 0.2 percent rise month over month and a yearly decline of 1.4 percent. Core CPI, which excludes volatile food and energy prices, is forecast to edge up 0.1 percent in September on a month-to-month basis and show a yearly gain of 1.4 percent.

Real earnings are expected to dip 0.1 percent for the month of September.

Initial claims for jobless insurance are expected at 525,000 on Thursday, roughly in line with last week's data, while continuing claims, at 6.02 million, are seen only marginally lower.

Industrial output and capacity utilization data for September are due on Friday morning, along with the preliminary reading for October on consumer sentiment from the Reuters/University of Michigan Surveys. □

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British PM Brown to announce assets sell-off

LONDON – British Prime Minister Gordon Brown plans to announce a sale of government assets aimed at raising 3 billion pounds (\$4.8 billion), his office said Sunday.

Nonfinancial assets to be sold over the next two years include the Channel Tunnel rail link, the Dartford bridge and tunnel crossing the River Thames, betting company the Tote, and the government's 33 percent stake in European uranium

consortium Urenco.

Brown is due to make the announcement in a speech Monday. Downing Street released details Sunday.

He also plans to say that local governments will sell off another 13 billion pounds (\$21 billion) in assets. The money will help finance capital investment and pay down debt, his office said.

Britain is suffering its worst recession in decades and the budget deficit, the

gap between spending and revenues, is widening. But Brown has recently sounded cautiously optimistic about the economy.

In an interview published Saturday, he said the economy would grow by 1.5 percent next year, more than many economists have foreseen.

Monday's speech is part of a bid to counter arguments by the opposition Conservatives that only deep public spending cuts

can slash the debt and turn around the economy.

The Conservatives propose raising the state pension age, tightening welfare programs and freezing the pay of hundreds of thousands of public sector workers.

Brown plans to say that slashing public spending would "cut the legs off from under the recovery and lead to higher deficits and debts down the line."

The economy looks certain

to be the dominant issue in a national election that must be held by the middle of 2010. Opinion polls give Cameron's Tories a substantial lead over Brown's Labour Party, which has been in power since 1997.

Downing Street said Brown would call on Monday for "unconventional thinking ... to avert a Japanese-style lost decade of low growth and jobless recovery." □

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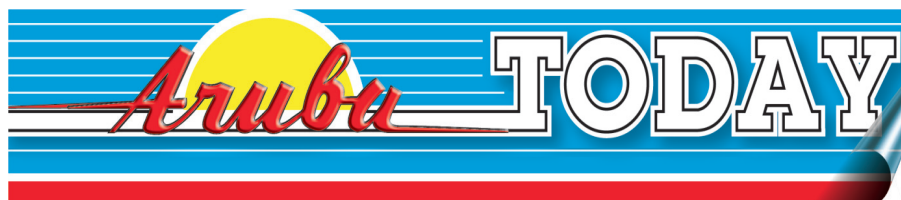
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UK's stance on Cayman tax haven may represent something far more significant

The View From Europe

For the most part, the sovereign nations of the Caribbean tend to look past their near neighbours in the non-independent Caribbean.

Occasionally an issue arises, such as the recent decision by Britain to take direct control over the Turks and Caicos Islands, and there is a response; but for the most part, developments in the Dutch Antilles, the French Départements d'Outre-Mer (the DOM) and the British Overseas territories pass with little or no comment. However, a number of unrelated events over the last months suggest that the independent part of the region might wish to pay closer attention to the difficulties their neighbours are experiencing in what has previously been a largely benign relationship with their respective metropolises. The case of the Turks and Caicos Islands is now well known. The UK government imposed direct rule on 14 August after a Commission of Inquiry into allegations against elected officials found evidence of 'systemic corruption, political amorality and administrative incompetence'. In response Caricom took the moral high ground, arguing with some justification that there were democratic alternatives to Britain's decision to take control. Far more significant though, in the longer term, is likely to be what has been happening in relation to the Cayman Islands and Anguilla. There, Britain is imposing its will in a manner that seems determined to change key aspects of the no-tax, financial services with tourism, economic model that London itself, until recently promoted for their development.

In the case of Cayman, Britain has taken the opportunity presented by

a significant decline in the islands' financial services and tourism revenues as a consequence of the global economic recession, and has refused to approve US\$465m of negotiated loans to enable it to meet its obligations to civil servants and suppliers. Instead it has given its permission for Government to borrow US\$40.5m at the cost of making spending cuts and the introduction of 'new revenue sources, including direct taxation'.

Unsurprisingly the islands leader of government business, McKeever Bush, who has opposition support on this issue, has said that he will not be pressurised into anything that would destroy the success the islands have worked to achieve. Instead he announced a budget of revenue-raising measures that do not change the island's income and corporation tax free status. For his part, the Minister with responsibility for Britain's Overseas Territories, Chris Bryant, has said that despite this he will not approve borrowings until there is a clear strategy for addressing debt. But more tellingly, wrote recently in the media: 'It is clearly in the interests of all the Overseas Territories to have open, transparent fiscal arrangements and sustainable revenue from a wide and diverse tax base. Mere tax haven status will not pay the bills, nor will an over-reliance on indirect taxation.... If we want to promote action on regulating tax havens worldwide, it is essential that Britain be in a position to lead by example.'

In a separate but now linked exercise it is expected that sometime later this month a UK Treasury commissioned report (the Independent Review of British Offshore Financial

Centres) will make far reaching recommendations that seek ways to change the tax status of its overseas territories.

All in all it is hard not to avoid the conclusion that this forms a part of the G20's wider recent consensus on offshore centres. Bermuda's finance minister, Paula Cox, thinks so. She recently told the Financial Times that she suspected that the world's richest states may be seeking extra-territorial solutions to resolve their economic, fiscal and financial challenges. "There is now a strong suspicion that the G20 has an undisclosed agenda item to drive forward a global corporate tax policy, which may fly in the face of a nation's sovereign right to set down its own tax policy", she is quoted as saying.

Uncertainty also prevails beyond the Anglophone territories.

In Martinique, there will be a referendum on January 17 to decide whether it continues as a full part of the French Republic or becomes a territory with autonomy, as provided for in the French constitution. In Guadeloupe a similar process may take place eighteen months later and in Guyane, a bill on changing the country's status within the French Republic was adopted by its assembly by a large majority in September. While these developments do not denote independence or any change in the DOM's status within the EU, they do indicate a desire for greater autonomy.

In the Dutch speaking Caribbean something similar is happening. There after years of often confusing and contradictory debate, the Dutch and Antillean governments have agreed that the Netherlands Antilles will cease to exist



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as a country within the Netherlands by 10 October 2010. Under the terms of the agreement Bonaire, St Eustatius and Saba will become municipalities of Holland while Curaçao and St Maarten will become independent countries within the Dutch Kingdom. However, finding viable new ways to devolve sovereignty is far from easy.

The world is not anxious to see independent micro states; budget cuts are placing more severe constraints on any nation's ability to devote long term resources to issues and locations that are not essential; and it is hard to imagine any nation wanting to resurrect Associated Statehood, where a metropolitan power is only responsible for defence and foreign policy.

While it is quite possible to see all these developments as parochial events in isolation from the wider region, they probably represent something far more significant in the

longer term: a desire by the metropolitan powers to find ways to maintain control in the face of a restlessness for a new status that is neither independence nor incorporation.

France and to a lesser extent the Netherlands seem to be seeking a more devolved relationship. But in the case of Britain it not clear if has the will to sustain a more controlling approach or whether, as with its now forgotten colonial past, weariness will slowly bring about new thinking and new solutions.

As matters stand it is hard to avoid the conclusion that Europe and its remaining overseas territories in the Caribbean have become estranged, have no appetite for divorce but have still to find a new basis on which they might live together. David Jessop is the Director of the Caribbean Council and can be contacted at david.jessop@caribbean-council.org

Previous columns can be found at www.caribbean-council.org



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Fans check in for 'Couples Retreat' with \$35.3M

By DAVID GERMAIN,
AP Movie Writer

"Swingers" co-stars Vince Vaughn and Jon Favreau buddied up for the weekend's top movie as "Couples Retreat" debuted with \$35.3 million, while the micro-budgeted fright flick "Paranormal Activity" leaped into the top 10.

Shot for a reported \$15,000, "Paranormal Activity" came in at No. 5 with \$7.1 million as distributor Paramount expanded it into daylong release after two weeks of midnight-only screenings. "Paranormal Activity" played in narrow release of just 160 cinemas, a fraction of the theater count for other top movies. It averaged a whopping \$44,163 a theater, compared with \$11,780 in 3,000 theaters for "Couples Retreat."

"You almost do a double take when you look at that theater count for a movie in the top five," said Paul Dergarabedian, box-office analyst for Hollywood.com. "That's amazing. That's unprecedented."

"Couples Retreat" exceeded expectations for distributor Universal Pictures, which had hoped the movie would top the \$20 million range. The solid opening came just days after Universal replaced top managers Marc Shmuger and David Linde with Adam Fogelson and Donna Langley, who were promoted from other jobs within the studio.

The management shake-up followed a summer of slim pickings at the box office for Universal, which released the Will Ferrell dud "Land of the Lost" and such commercial underachievers as Adam Sandler's "Funny People" and Jennifer Aniston's "Love Happens."

"I feel pretty good today. Happy to have a hit," said Nikki Rocco, head of distribution for Universal. "It happened at the right time, because it did lift our spirits, having the summer we had."

Along with Vaughn and Favreau, whose collaborations include last year's holiday hit "Four Christmases," "Couples Retreat" features Jason Bateman, Kristin Davis, Kristen Bell and Malin Akerman in a tale of friends at an island therapy resort.

"Paranormal Activity" was acquired by former Paramount partner DreamWorks at 2007's Slamdance Film Festival with the idea that writer-director Oren Peli would re-shoot it on a bigger budget.

But after audiences responded well to a test screening, Paramount decided to sneak "Paranormal Activity" out in a manner befitting its raw, independent roots. The studio began two weekends ago with midnight screenings in 13 cities, the movie building buzz online much as "The Blair Witch Project" did 10 years ago.

Like "Blair Witch," "Paranormal Activity" is

fiction shot in documentary style as a young man tries to record strange doings and apparitions in the house he shares with his girlfriend.

Fans talked it up on Twitter and Facebook, while the movie expanded to more cities based on which markets received the most requests to see it on a Web site Paramount set up. This past weekend's 46 markets were heavy on big cities, but mid-sized cities such as Norfolk, Va., also made the cut as fans there voted to bring the movie.

"We all spend a lot of time talking about Facebook and Twitter and our ability to communicate. Here's a case where it allows people to rally around a movie they care about and for them to have a sense of participation, then tell other people, 'Hey, this is something you should see, too,'" said Rob Moore, Paramount vice chairman.

According to Paramount, "Paranormal Activity" had a record weekend for a movie playing in fewer than 200 theaters, surpassing the \$3.7 million haul for "Platoon" in 174 theaters early in its run



Vince Vaughn, left, and Faizon Love, cast members in 'Couples Retreat,' pose together at the premiere of the film in Los Angeles, Monday, Oct. 5, 2009.

(AP Photo/Chris Pizzello)

in 1987. Factoring in today's higher prices for movie tickets, which average nearly twice as much as in 1987, "Paranormal Activity" sold about the same number of tickets as "Platoon."

Including its take from midnight

screenings the previous two weeks, "Paranormal Activity" has grossed \$8.3 million. Paramount plans to expand it to several hundred more theaters next weekend, again adding new markets based on where it gets the most requests. □

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Gately, of Irish boy band Boyzone, dies in Spain

By MANUEL MIELNIEZUK,
Associated Press Writer

PORT D'ANDRATX, Balearic Islands — Stephen Gately, a singer with the Irish boy band Boyzone who made headlines when he came out as gay a decade ago, has died while on vacation in Spain, the group said on its Web site Sunday. He was 33.

Gately "tragically died" on Saturday while visiting the island of Mallorca, the band said in a brief statement. The cause of death was not immediately clear.

Gerald Kean, a Gately family friend in Ireland, said he the singer died of natural causes, without identifying them.

"There's no foul play involved, and it's not suicide. It's just a tragic accident is what we've been told, and we're happy that that is correct information," Kean said. "There is nothing untoward. It's not drugs, we don't believe. It's not suicide. It's not murder. It's not a fight. That's what we've been told."

Kean said an autopsy was expected to be conducted Tuesday.

Gately and his partner Andrew Cowles, who were wed in a civil union in 2006, were in Mallorca together, the band's statement said. "At present we don't have too many details," the statement said. Members of the group were expected to arrive at Palma de Mallorca international airport Sunday afternoon.

Spanish police said they were called to a house near Port d'Andratx on the western tip of the island on Saturday afternoon. The cause of

death was unknown and there were no signs of violence, a police spokesman said, on condition of anonymity in keeping with police rules. He said there was likely to be an autopsy.

The house, situated on an exclusive tree-lined seafront street, overlooks a rocky bay reputed to have some of the best sunset views on Spain's favorite holiday island.

By midday Sunday journalists had begun to gather outside the quiet, seaside building with several vacation apartments.

Boyzone members Ronan Keating, Keith Duffy, Mikey Graham and Shane Lynch said they were "completely devastated by the loss of our friend and brother, Stephen."

"We have shared such wonderful times together over the years and were all looking forward to sharing many more. Stephen was a beautiful person in both body and spirit. He lit up our lives and those of the many friends he had all over the world. Our love and sympathy go out to Andrew and Stephen's family. We love you and will miss you forever, 'Steo'," their statement said.

Boyzone was a U.K. hitmaker in the 1990s and announced a comeback tour at the end of last year. Gately also had released several solo singles and appeared in stage musicals, including "Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat." He revealed his sexual orientation to a British newspaper in 1999.

Elton John said Sunday that he and his partner, David Furnish, were "stunned by this tragedy." □



FILE - In this May 8, 2008 file photo, Stephen Gately poses for photographs with other members of Irish band Boyzone, not pictured, as they arrive at the Caudwell Children's Charity Legends Ball in London, Britain. Singer Gately has died while on vacation in Spain, the group said on its Web site Sunday Oct. 11, 2009. He was 33.

(AP Photo/Matt Dunham, File)



Gay rights advocates march on DC, divided on Obama



Gay rights advocates fill the west lawn of the Capitol during a rally in Washington, Sunday, Oct. 11, 2009.

(AP Photo/Jacquelyn Martin)
See Next Page

Key Democrat wants boost in forces in Afghanistan

by RICHARD LARDNER,
Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON — The U.S. mission in Afghanistan is in “serious jeopardy” and needs more troops to turn the tide against an increasingly potent Taliban insurgency, the head of the Senate Intelligence Committee said Sunday, putting her at odds with an influential Democratic colleague on military matters. Sen. Dianne Feinstein’s views are more closely aligned with those of key Republicans than members of her own party. Sen. Carl Levin, chairman of Senate Armed Services Committee, urged a more methodical approach that begins with crafting a new, comprehensive strategy for Afghanistan. “I’m saying at this time, don’t send more combat troops,” said Levin, D-Mich., who wants the emphasis to be



Afghan President Hamid Karzai gestures to journalists after giving a press conference at Presidential Palace in Kabul, Afghanistan, Sunday, Oct. 11, 2009. ‘Day by day, Afghanistan faces more security problems, there is a decrease in the national income, there is an increase in insecurity across the country, there is a negative impact on daily business,’ Karzai said. ‘I wish the election results could be announced sooner.’

(AP Photo/Musadeq Sadeq)

on strengthening Afghanistan’s own security forces so they can bear a greater share of the security burden.

But Feinstein, D-Calif., whose post gives her access

to sensitive information about the war’s progress, said delaying the reinforcements also puts the forces already in Afghanistan at greater risk.

Continued on Page B4

Oregon thinning project tests Obama forest policy



A building stands on the shores of Diamond Lake, Ore., on Sept. 8, 2009, where dense forests and a growing beetle infestation have raised fears of wildfire. The U.S. Forest Service plans to thin around the cabins as well as in back country regions known as roadless areas. Conservation groups hope to hold President Obama to a promise to respect a rule restricting logging in roadless areas.

(AP Photo/Jeff Barnard)

By JEFF BARNARD,
Associated Press Writer

DIAMOND LAKE, Ore. — When Sharon Karr’s cabin was built on the shores of this high mountain lake in 1928, there were few neighbors and little thought given to the prospects of wildfire. There are now 102 cabins on this land on the Umpqua National Forest, and fears of a big fire have grown. Young trees have crowded in among the big ones, and an increasing number of the pines are turning red and dying from the borings of mountain pine beetles.

Continued on Page B5



Kai Eide, head of the U.N. mission in Afghanistan, center, is flanked by French Ambassador Jean de Ponton d’Amecourt, left, and British Ambassador Mark Sedwill, as Eide addresses a press conference in Kabul, Afghanistan, Sunday, Oct. 11, 2009. Eide acknowledged Sunday that there was ‘widespread fraud’ in the August presidential election but refused to give specifics or lay blame to avoid influencing the ongoing recount.

(AP Photo/Altaf Qadri)

UN chief acknowledges fraud in Afghan vote

Read Page B6

Gay rights advocates march on DC, divided on Obama



Lauren Hendricks, 20, of Tallahassee, Fla., left, and Cameron Tolle, 21, of Cincinnati, Oh., chant with thousands of gay rights advocates during a march in Washington, on Sunday, Oct. 11, 2009.

By **BRETT ZONGKER**,
Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON—Thousands of gay rights supporters marched Sunday from the White House to the Capitol, demanding that President Barack Obama keep his promises to allow gays to serve openly in the military and work to end discrimination against gays.

Rainbow flags and homemade signs dotted the crowds filling Pennsylvania Avenue in front of the White House as people chanted “Hey, Obama, let mama marry mama” and

(AP Photo/Jacquelyn Martin)
“We’re out, we’re proud, we won’t back down.” Many children were also among the protesters. A few counter-protesters had also joined the crowd, which stretched several blocks by the afternoon. Jason Yanowitz, a 37-year-old computer programmer from Chicago, held his daughter, 5-year-old Amira, on his shoulders. His partner, Annie, had their 2-year-old son, Isiah, in a stroller. Yanowitz said more straight people were turning out to show their support for gay rights. “If somebody doesn’t have

equal rights, then none of us are free,” he said.

“For all I know, she’s gay or he’s gay,” he added, pointing to his children.

Some participants in the National Equality March woke up energized by Obama’s blunt pledge to end the ban on gays serving openly in the military during a speech to the nation’s largest gay rights group Saturday night.

The chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee said Sunday that Congress will need to muster the resolve to change the “don’t ask, don’t tell” policy — a change that the military may be ready for. “I think it has to be done in the right way, which is to get a buy-in from the military, which I think is now possible,” said Sen. Carl Levin, D-Mich.

Obama’s political energies have been focused on two wars, the economic crisis and health care reform, though he pledged “unwavering” commitment even as he wrestled with those problems. March organizer Cleve Jones, creator of the AIDS Memorial Quilt and a protege of gay rights pioneer Harvey Milk, said he had initially discouraged a rally earlier in the year. But he and others began to worry Obama was backing away from his campaign promises.

“Since we’ve seen that so many times before, I didn’t want it to happen again,” he said. “We’re not settling.

There’s no such thing as a fraction of equality.”

Unlike the first march in 1979 and others in 1987, 1993 and 2000 that included celebrity performances and drew as many as 500,000 people, Sunday’s event was driven by grassroots efforts and was expected to be more low-key. Washington authorities don’t disclose crowd estimates at rallies, though at least several thousand appeared to be in attendance.

Also among the crowd were a couple of noteworthy activists: Cynthia Nixon, a cast member from HBO’s “Sex and the City” who hopes to marry partner Christine Marinoni next year; and Judy Shepard, who became an advocate for gay rights after her son Matthew was killed because he was gay. Many marchers were outraged after the passage of California’s Proposition 8, which canceled the right of gays to get married in the state. Kipp Williams, a 27-year-old San Francisco resident, said he moved to California from the South seeking equality but realized after Proposition 8 that gay people are second-class citizens everywhere.

Contrary to the California Supreme Court’s decision on the legality of the referendum, he said “there is no exception to the equal protection clause of the 14th Amendment of the Constitution.”

Sara Schoonover-Martin, 34, came from Martinsburg,

W.Va., with her wife, Nicki, wearing matching veils and pink T-shirts that said “bride” and “I do.” The couple eloped at Martha’s Vineyard in Massachusetts earlier this year.

“When marriage is legalized in West Virginia, we will renew our vows and have our family and friends there,” Sara said. “I’m angry that it hasn’t occurred quicker. This affects my life every day, 365 days a year.” For Lt. Dan Choi, the day began with a jog around Washington’s memorials, calling cadence at 8 a.m. with fellow veterans and supporters before joining the march. Choi, a West Point graduate, Arabic speaker and Iraq war veteran, is facing discharge under the military’s “don’t ask, don’t tell” policy for revealing in March that he is gay.

He appeared later at a rally, wearing his Army uniform and a piece of black tape over his mouth.

“Many of us have been discharged from the service because we told the truth,” he said. “But I know that love is worth it.” Other activists doubted the march would accomplish much. They said the time and money would have been better spent working to persuade voters in Maine and Washington state, where the November ballot will include a measure that would overturn a bill granting same-sex couples many of the benefits of marriage. □

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Phase 1 of PCB removal on Hudson wrapping up

By MICHAEL HILL,
Associated Press Writer

FORT EDWARD, N.Y.

— Crews dredging a polluted stretch of the upper Hudson River this year battled high water, old logging debris and unexpected levels of PCB contamination that slowed progress.

But as the first phase of one of the most costliest and complex federal Superfund projects wraps up this month, regulators say results are generally positive and show dredging can work. They are already preparing for a far more expansive second phase, which would clean up 40 miles of river and likely push total project costs over \$700 million.

“We took on Mother Nature. She threw everything at us but the kitchen sink, from timber, to boats that were sunk, to tree branches,” said George Pavlou, acting regional administrator for the Environmental Protection Agency. “We prevailed in the end.”

Dredging began in the rural area in May after decades of argument over how to deal with tons of PCBs that flowed down the river in 1973 after a dam was removed. Upriver General Electric plants in Fort Edward and neighboring Hudson Falls discharged wastewater containing PCBs for decades before the popular lubricant and coolant was banned in 1977. PCBs, or polychlorinated vinyls, are considered probable

carcinogens.

Under an agreement between General Electric Co. and the EPA, the company paid the cost of dredging concentrated pockets of PCBs this year about 40 miles north of Albany. GE treated the toxic waste at a nearby “dewatering” plant and shipped the dried remains by rail to a western Texas site for burial in a landfill designed to isolate the treated PCBs from the surroundings.

Crews managed to dredge 10 of 18 PCB “hot spots” targeted this year. They removed more than 240,000 cubic yards of contaminated sediment, but expect to fall shy of the original target of 265,000 cubic yards when dredging ends mid-month.

Progress was slowed because contamination was often deeper and more concentrated than expected. In some areas, crews removed 60 to 80 percent more sediment than expected, said GE spokesman Mark Behan. In particular, contaminated debris left over from the old Adirondack logging industry complicated work.

“There was substantially more wood debris than expected, and the wood debris at the bottom of the river made it impossible for the sampling to determine the depth of the contaminated sediment,” Behan said.

At one point, dredging crews accidentally ripped into the original Fort Edward, which had been buried in

a river bank, prompting an archaeological excavation of the 1750s British fort and revelations about military engineering of forts in the wilderness.

It’s still not clear if the eight unfinished hot spots will be cleaned up next year or rolled into Phase 2, which the EPA wants to start in 2011.

Barges will start leaving the river in the coming weeks. Results of the work will be analyzed by General Electric, the EPA and an independent panel of experts with an eye toward making improvements for the next phase, which could take five years.

The overriding question before the work began was whether dredging would be a cure worse than the disease. Opponents feared dredging would kick up contaminated silt and spike pollution levels in the river.

Two monitoring stations downriver have detected cumulative levels of PCBs above EPA standards. Also, the federal agency’s thresholds for PCB “resuspension” in the water were exceeded twice, causing a temporary shutdown of work in August and a partial shutdown in September. There also were more than 90 instances when PCB levels in the air exceeded standards, likely from dredged sediment piled on barges or at the facility. Crews changed handling and operating procedures to reduce air releases.



In this photo made Wednesday, Oct. 7, 2009, crews dredge a stretch of the Hudson River in Fort Edward, N.Y. Dredging began in May after decades of argument over how to deal with tons of PCBs that flowed down the river after a dam here was removed. General Electric plants in Fort Edward and neighboring Hudson Falls discharged wastewater containing PCBs for decades before the popular lubricant was banned in 1977.

(AP Photo/Mike Groll)

The work — involving tugs, barges and dredging scoops suspended from cranes — got louder than desired sometimes. More than half of the 33 complaints by residents were noise-related. Five were about the smell.

Tim Havens, longtime president of the anti-dredging group CEASE, cited the shortcomings in calling the dredging a “miserable failure.”

“They set the natural recovery of the river back for decades,” he said.

But other locals welcomed the industrial armada, either out of belief in dredging or the stimulus effect of more than 250 local jobs.

“It’s not bad at all,” Valerie

Iuliucci said as she wrote up the lunch special on a board outside Jim’s Broadway Cafe, in clear sight of a dredging barge. She said dredging crews have been a boon to the business.

“They all come in here at lunch time,” she said.

Though GE spent \$629 million related to PCBs from 1990 through this spring, it has yet to agree to pay for Phase 2. Behan said the company will make a decision after the Phase 1 data is analyzed and the EPA determines the scope of what it wants for the next phase. If GE declines, the EPA still has options under Superfund law to make sure the work is done. □



KEY DEMOCRATS

Continued from Page B1

She pointed to an Oct. 3 battle in northeastern Afghanistan in which eight U.S. soldiers were killed during an enemy attack on their remote outpost.

"We didn't have the ability to defend them, and now the base is closing, and effectively

we're retreating away from it," she said.

The diverging opinions came as President Barack Obama and his war council wrestle with how many more troops might be needed in the 8-year-old Afghanistan conflict. Key to the deliberations are whether to focus the fighting

more narrowly on al-Qaida or more broadly on Taliban insurgents.

Obama's military commanders are pressing him to escalate the war despite slipping U.S. support for the fight. Army Gen. Stanley McChrystal, the top U.S. commander in Afghanistan, is believed to have presented Obama with a range of options, from adding as few as 10,000 troops to — the general's strong preference — as many as 40,000. There are already about 68,000 American forces in Afghanistan.

Levin said a better blueprint for the way ahead in Afghanistan is even more important than additional personnel. He also said key points in McChrystal's 66-page assessment of the situation in Afghanistan have been lost in the noisy debate over the right number of additional troops and how quickly they need to be sent.

"He also says deliberate," Levin said of McChrystal's review. "Take the right amount of time to think this thing through. And he also says that what is even more important than numbers is the resolve." McChrystal's request, while important, is only one piece of what Obama has to consider, Levin said.

The eventual plan needs to include more U.S. trainers to make Afghan security forces more effective, Levin said. There also needs to be a way to persuade Taliban fighters to switch sides, he said, calling the current shortage of Afghan forces is an "Achilles' heel." "The surge that will really work in Afghanistan is a surge of Afghan troops," Levin said. Meanwhile, Republicans argued that Obama would be making a major mistake if he doesn't quickly answer McChrystal's call for more troops.

Sen. John McCain, the top Republican on the Armed Services Committee, said it would be "an error of historic proportions" if Obama decides against a significantly larger U.S. presence. Sen. Lindsey Graham, R-S.C., said Afghan national police are "getting slaughtered" and thousands more forces are needed to bring security and stability to the country. □



FILE - In this Nov. 27, 2006 file photo, U.S. Army Staff Sgt Ruben Romero, from Fort Benning, Ga., demonstrates new technology making use of a magnifying video camera and thermal imaging on the M4 weapon, during a demonstration in Riga, Latvia.

(AP Photo/Kirsty Wigglesworth, File)

In 2008 Afghanistan firefight, US weapons failed

By **RICHARD LARDNER**,
Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON — It was chaos during the early morning assault last year on a remote U.S. outpost in Afghanistan and Staff Sgt. Erich Phillips' M4 carbine had quit firing as militant forces surrounded the base. The machine gun he grabbed after tossing the rifle aside didn't work either.

When the battle in the small village of Wanat ended, nine U.S. soldiers lay dead and 27 more were wounded. A detailed study of the attack by a military historian found that weapons failed repeatedly at a "critical moment" during the firefight on July 13, 2008, putting the outnumbered American troops at risk of being overrun by nearly 200 insurgents.

Which raises the question: Eight years into the war against the Taliban in Afghanistan, do U.S. armed forces have the best guns money can buy? Despite the military's insistence that they do, a small but vocal number of troops in Afghanistan and Iraq has complained that the standard-issue M4 rifles need too much maintenance and jam at the worst possible times.

A week ago, eight U.S. troops were killed at a base near Kamdesh, a town near Wanat. There's no immediate evidence of weapons failures at Kamdesh on Oct. 3, but the circumstances were eerily similar to the Wanat battle: insurgents stormed an isolated stronghold manned by American forces stretched thin by the demands of war.

Army Col. Wayne Shanks, a military spokesman in Afghanistan, said a review of the battle at Kamdesh is under way. "It is too early to make any assumptions regarding what did or didn't work correctly," he said.

Complaints about the weapons the troops carry, especially the M4, aren't new. Army officials say that when properly cleaned and maintained, the M4 is a quality weapon that can pump out more than 3,000 rounds before any failures occur.

The M4 is a shorter, lighter version of the M16, which made its debut during the Vietnam war. Roughly 500,000 M4s are in service, making it the rifle troops on the front lines trust with their lives. Sen. Tom Coburn, R-Okla., a leading critic of the M4, said Thursday the Army needs to move quickly to acquire a combat rifle suited for the extreme conditions U.S. troops are fighting in.

U.S. special operations forces, with their own acquisition budget and the latitude to buy gear the other military branches can't, already are replacing their M4s with a new rifle.

"The M4 has served us well but it's not as good as it needs to be," Coburn said.

Battlefield surveys show that nearly 90 percent of soldiers are satisfied with their M4s, according to Brig. Gen. Peter Fuller, head of the Army office that buys soldier gear. Still, the rifle is continually being improved to make it even more reliable and lethal. □

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1 adult killed, students hurt in Idaho bus crash

INKOM, Idaho — A bus carrying a celebrated Utah high school band swerved off an Idaho interstate and crashed on its side, killing an instructor and injuring some students, police and a school official said.

Two students were rushed by helicopter Saturday night to a hospital in Pocatello, said John Miller, director of the American Fork, Utah, high school band. Another 12 were sent to a hospital by ambulance with serious injuries, and 30 students were taken to a hospital for minor injuries, he told The Associated Press.

The band was heading back to American Fork High School after a competition in Pocatello when the wreck occurred at about 7 p.m. MDT on Interstate 15, about two miles north of McCammon and 50 miles north of the Utah border. Idaho state police said a preliminary investigation showed the bus driver had a medical condition that caused the crash.

Police identified the person killed as 33-year-old Heather Christensen of Spanish Fork, Utah. She was the school's woodwind instructor. Police said the students' injuries were not life-threatening.

Miller said two girls who were held at the hospital overnight were released Sunday and a third girl was expected to be released either later Sunday or Monday.

Members of the band were to meet Sunday with Miller and his staff at the school to discuss the accident and whether they would participate in a Tuesday competition at Brigham Young University in Provo. A public memorial was to be held at the school gym after Miller and the students met.

"Considering everything, they're doing wonderful," Miller said. "They just had a really tough night last night." Miller, who was on a different bus, said he was told that Christensen noticed the driver slump over and leaped up to grab the wheel. Miller said her actions likely prevented

the crash from being even worse.

"She was doing what she loved — helping kids," Miller said.

Miller said 54 students were on the bus that crashed. A total of 222 students were on the trip, divided into four buses. American Fork band member James Kimball, 16, was in the bus behind the one that crashed and witnessed the wreck.

"We were watching a movie, and I looked forward and saw the bus bouncing across the side of the road," the high school junior told The Salt Lake Tribune. "The bus flew off to the side, bumped across a couple hills and rolled over."

Distraught students sang church hymns after learning of the instructor's death, Kimball said.

Kimball said the band, one of Utah's best-known, won the Pocatello competition. The school's bands have won the Utah state title for the past 19 years. The school band also performed at President George W. Bush's 2005 inauguration and marched in the 2007 Macy's Thanksgiving Day parade in New York.

Miller said he was getting calls and e-mails all day Sunday. "It's just been powerful," he said. "The national band community is amazing." □

OBAMA FOREST POLICY

Continued from Page B1

The Bush administration had proposed lessening fire dangers by thinning trees around the cabins and also in the backcountry.

Conservation groups are closely watching the logging proposal as a test of whether President Barack Obama follows through on his promise to break from the Bush administration and protect the 58 million acres of national forests across the country that are known as roadless areas from commercial logging.

"This puts Obama now in the position ... where he can clarify and end 20 years of roadless battles by making a very clear decision that they simply should not be roaded and logged," said Kieran Suckling, policy director of the Center for Biological Diversity. "We are getting mixed signals."

Karr is resigned to cut trees around her cabin to reduce the risk of fire, but is less sure about thinning far from the cabins in the back country, where the U.S. Forest Service says it needs fire breaks so firefighters can stop a fire before it gets to the cabins.

"It's at that point where I can't decide if we need to save the roadless area or we need to protect what we call the urban interface," she said.

Steve Koch, general manager of the Diamond Lake Resort, has no doubts thinning in the back country will help prevent a disaster.

"Once it (a fire) gets going it's not going to stop. It's going to walk right over the top of us," he said.

During the presidential campaign, Obama promised to respect a 2001 Clinton administration rule to protect roadless areas in national forests from commercial logging. It was his one promise concerning national forests, which had been a battleground during the Bush administration's eight years in office. Roadless areas have escaped logging largely because they have been too remote and rugged to make timber harvests profitable. But with the government spending \$1 billion a year to fight wildfires, pressure to do something is growing. The 2001 rule allows thinning to reduce the danger of wildfire and control insect infestations — both of which are factors around

Diamond Lake.

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack last May said he would personally review all proposals to log in roadless areas. One exception is national forests in Idaho, where the state adopted the Bush administration's offer to take authority over roadless development.

In August Vilsack gave a speech saying conserving national forests was a necessity and they would be managed to protect clean water and combat climate change.

Some conservation groups remain wary.

Though the Obama administration has refused to defend a number of Bush administration environmental policies in court, it did not walk away from 2007 plans to open nearly 1 million acres to road building on four national forests in Southern California, Suckling said.

A federal judge last month tossed out the plan. "They have been slow out of the box and have not been aggressive about withdrawing the flawed policies of the Bush administration," Suckling said.

"The sense I get of Vilsack and the Forest Service now is they are going to be significantly reticent to gear up for significant new roadless projects."

Jay Jensen, deputy undersecretary of Agriculture for the Forest Service, said the logging proposal has yet to reach the secretary's desk — it is still moving through the Forest Service review process — but if it does it will be evaluated on its merits.

"We want to protect roadless areas," he said. "We will be looking at each one of these with a fresh perspective of what is happening on the ground." Jensen said there could be some cases where thinning to control bugs and fire was appropriate.

In Southern Oregon, the lodgepole pines that dominate the forests around Diamond Lake are showing increasing numbers of mountain pine beetle infestations, setting the stage for a big fire that starts the natural cycle all over again, Diamond Lake District Ranger Bill Gamble said.

Thinning in roadless areas was designed to give firefighters a place to make a stand, control the insect outbreak, and make highways safe as evacuation routes, he said. □



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UN chief acknowledges fraud in Afghan vote

By HEIDI VOGT,
Associated Press Writers

KABUL—The top U.N. official in Afghanistan on Sunday acknowledged “widespread fraud” in the disputed presidential election and rejected allegations from a former deputy that he covered up cheating to smooth the path to victory for President Hamid Karzai.

The remarks by Norwegian diplomat Kai Eide appeared designed to win back respect for both the troubled U.N. mission and the entire election process ahead of a ruling by investigators on whether fraud was extensive enough in the Aug. 20 balloting to require a runoff. Eide’s reputation was tarnished when his deputy Peter Galbraith alleged that the U.N. mission chief downplayed allegations of widespread ballot-stuffing by Karzai’s supporters. Galbraith, the top-ranking American in the U.N. mission, was fired Sept. 30 by U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon after the widely publicized dispute.

A U.N.-backed fraud panel is expected to decide this week whether to throw out enough votes to require a runoff between Karzai and his top challenger, Abdullah Abdullah. Doubts about the U.N.’s neutrality could throw the panel’s rulings into question.

The Obama administration and its international partners had hoped the vote — the first presidential election run by Afghans — would restore legitimacy to a government plagued by weakness and corruption. Instead, widespread allegations of ballot-box stuffing have sullied Karzai’s reputation and Galbraith’s accusations threaten to undermine the credibility of the U.N. which helped organize the election.

In a separate news conference, Karzai told reporters that “confusion” over election results had been “created by Western elements in our country.” He did not elaborate.

During a press conference, Eide said Galbraith’s allegations were untrue in some cases and taken out of context in others. Eide was flanked by ambassadors from the United States, Britain and France in a show of international support for the U.N. mission and its embattled leader.

Eide said he could “only say that there was widespread fraud” and that “any specific figure at this time would be pure speculation” until the recount is complete. Eide said Galbraith’s allegations against him have “affected the entire election process.”

Final results have been delayed by more than a month as a U.N.-backed panel set up as a check on the Afghan-appointed election commission examines complaints and suspicious votes. Though preliminary tallies show Karzai winning with about 54 percent, enough Karzai ballots are suspect that the voiding of fraudulent votes could drop him below the 50 percent threshold needed to

avoid a runoff.

Eide said he remains “committed to the process” and pointed to the ongoing fraud investigations as proof that systems set up to catch cheating are working.

Last week, Galbraith said he was sticking by his allegations. He accused the United Nations of failing to exercise its responsibility to oversee the Afghan elections, adding that “the fraud that took place in Afghanistan was preventable.”

Four U.N. staffers who worked under Galbraith have resigned over the dispute, U.N. spokesman Aleem Siddique said.

Among other things, Galbraith complained that polling stations were allowed to open in areas that were insecure, raising the likelihood of fraud. Eide said military operations were launched in a bid to secure to open as many stations as possible.

Eide said that closing such stations would have denied a large number of people the opportunity to vote and created “an important element of potential instability in the country.”

Many polling stations believed affected by fraud were in areas of the Taliban-controlled south where turnout was low.

Eide denied that he had told U.N. staffers not to pass on credible information about ballot-stuffing or low-to-nonexistent turnout. However, he said reports from second- or third-hand sources were not reported because they did not appear credible.

“Some of these allegations are based on private conversations whilst he was a guest in my home for two months,” Eide said. “My view is that private discussions around the dinner table remain just that: private.”

Eide said both he and the U.N. mission have suffered from the accusations, and that the charges have also “heightened the temperature” of discussions about elections, making it harder to convince people that the process will be fair.

Once the election results become clear, President Barack Obama is expected to complete a review of Afghan strategy and decide whether to accept a recommendation by his top commander here, Gen. Stanley McChrystal, for up to 40,000 more troops.

Among the options under review is a plan to maintain U.S. troop numbers at their current levels and shift the focus to missile strikes and special operations against al-Qaida leaders, including those sheltering in neighboring Pakistan.

In the latest fighting, U.S. and Afghan forces stormed a mountainside compound in eastern Afghanistan before dawn Sunday and killed more than a dozen militants in a compound used by an al-Qaida figure, according to the U.S. military. □



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	matinee: 12:00	2:15	late show:	11:15
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R	JENNIFER'S BODY	daily: 5:30	7:45	10:00
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NEW				3D
PG-13	SURROGATES	daily: 6:30	8:45	
	matinee: 1:15	3:45	late show:	11:15
R	JENNIFER'S BODY	daily: 4:45	7:00	9:15
	matinee: 12:15	2:30	late show:	11:30
PG-13	TYLER PERRY'S I CAN DO BAD ALL BY MYSELF	daily: 8:30		
	matinee:		late show:	11:15
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PG-13	G.I. JOE: THE RISE OF THE COBRA	daily: 6:00		
	matinee: 12:30	3:30	late show:	
R	FINAL DESTINATION 4	daily: 8:15	10:15	
	matinee:		late show:	12:15
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Turkey bars Israel from military drill

By ARON HELLER,
Associated Press Writer

JERUSALEM — Turkey has called off an international military drill because it opposed Israel's participation, Israeli defense officials said Sunday, a move that sent strained relations between the two nations to a new low. Turkey has long been the Jewish state's best friend in the Muslim world. But ties have deteriorated dramatically since Israel's war last winter against Islamic militants in the Gaza Strip, which killed hundreds of civilians.

Turkey, a secular country ruled by an Islamic-oriented party, strongly condemned the Israeli offensive. Tensions soared after Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan stormed out of a high-profile conference where he confronted Israel's president over steep Palestinian civilian casualties.

Turkey's surprise cancellation of the air force drill, which was also to include the U.S. and NATO, was the first time its criticism of Israel has been translated into concrete action.

A brief statement posted on the Turkish military's Web site said the sixth annual Anatolia Eagle drill would

take place Oct. 10-23, but that international participation had been canceled after "international negotiations conducted by the Turkish Foreign Ministry."

A Turkish government official, who spoke on condition of anonymity because of the sensitivity of the issue, insisted that the decision was "due to a technical matter" rather than a political decision.

However, both Israeli and NATO officials confirmed the Turks had banned Israel from the drill. "The exercise has been postponed as a result of Turkey's decision to change the list of participating countries, thus excluding Israel," the army said in a statement.

Israeli officials said that in response to Turkey's decision against Israel, the U.S. pulled out of the exercise, forcing Ankara to cancel the drill. They spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to discuss the matter with the media. There was no immediate U.S. comment.

The defense officials expressed disappointment with the decision. Beyond the diplomatic damage, they said the drill is an important training opportunity for Israeli pilots, who generally are

confined to Israel's limited airspace.

Israeli officials are also concerned about Turkey's growing alliance with Iran. Israel considers Iran its greatest threat, citing Tehran's suspect nuclear program and its support for anti-Israel militant groups.

Turkey and Israel grew close in the mid-1990s, their alliance based on mutual fears of Iran, Iraq and Syria.

Israel has supplied hundreds of millions of dollars of military equipment to Turkey over the years and has renovated Turkish tanks and fighter planes. The two countries have also conducted joint naval exercises, including a drill with the U.S. in the Mediterranean in August, the Israeli air force has trained over Turkish airspace and last year Turkey hosted months of indirect talks between Israel and Syria after an eight-year breakdown. Turkey is also a popular destination for Israeli tourists.

But since Erdogan's Islamic government came to power in 2003, Turkey's ties with Israel have cooled as it has grown closer to Iran, Syria and Hamas — the Islamic leaders of Gaza.

Efraim Inbar, director of



In this Tuesday, Aug. 19, 2008 file photo, Turkish naval ships are seen in the Mediterranean Sea off the shore of the Israeli city of Haifa during a joint U.S., Israeli and Turkish military exercise. Turkey has canceled an annual joint air force drill that was to have taken place this week because it opposed Israeli participation, the Israeli military said Sunday, Oct. 11, 2009, in the latest sign of deteriorating relations between the two countries.

(AP Photo/Sebastian Scheiner, File)

the Begin-Sadat Center for Strategic Studies, said that during the Gaza war, Turkey took an even more anti-Israel stance than Arab nations such as Egypt, Jordan and Saudi Arabia. He said it was part of a Turkish foreign policy of distancing itself from the West, and "this comes at the expense of Israel."

Mustafa Kibaroglu, an expert on Turkish-Israeli relations at assistant at Ankara's Bilkent University, called Turkey's ties to these Muslim nations "precarious."

"Should there be deterioration for any reason, then relations

with Israel could again gain a strategic importance," he said.

"I believe that from an economic point of view, technologically and for security reasons, the two countries need each other."

Turkish-Israeli ties have been tested in the past, but the shared security interests have persevered over any political disagreements.

Deputy Israeli Foreign Minister Danny Ayalon seemed to be trying to temper tensions Sunday, calling Turkey a "very important strategic anchor in the Mideast." □

US envoy leaves Mideast without peace talks deal



U.S. Mideast envoy George Mitchell, left, meets with Egyptian Foreign Minister Ahmed Aboul Gheit, in Cairo, Egypt, Sunday, Oct. 11, 2009. Talks come within the framework of efforts aimed at reviving the Middle East peace process.

By AMY TEIBEL,
Associated Press Writer

JERUSALEM — Washington's special Mideast envoy wrapped up his latest round of shuttle diplomacy in the region on Sunday, again having failed to persuade the Israelis and Palestinians to resume peace talks.

The envoy, George Mitchell, spent more than an hour huddling with Israel's prime minister and defense minister. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's office said the talks "continued their discussions on moving the peace process forward."

(AP Photo/Amr Nabil)

Two lower-level Israeli officials will head to Washington this week for further discussions, it added. Mitchell did not comment publicly after the meeting and was returning to Washington, U.S. officials said.

Mitchell, a former U.S. senator and mediator of Northern Ireland's peace deal, has been shuttling between Israeli and Palestinian officials for months, trying to restart negotiations that broke down late last year.

Mitchell met with Netanyahu and Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas late last

week before traveling to Cairo over the weekend to meet with Egyptian officials, who often play leading roles in mediating the conflict.

Even with the Nobel Peace Prize awarded to his boss, Mitchell appeared to have made little progress in persuading the adversaries to soften their positions.

Israel has refused to give in to U.S. pressure to freeze construction in Jewish settlements built in the West Bank and east Jerusalem.

The Palestinians, who claim both areas as parts of a future independent state, say they won't resume talks without such an internationally mandated freeze. They also want guarantees that an Israeli pullout from the West Bank and east Jerusalem will be the basis of a final agreement. Israel captured both areas in the 1967 Mideast war.

"The Israelis need to acknowledge that the 1967 borders are the borders between the two states, and this is the foundation of any negotiations," said Yasser Abed Rabbo, a top Abbas aide.

Netanyahu has signaled he

wants to keep parts of the West Bank and says east Jerusalem will remain in Israeli hands.

Abbas will be hard-pressed to back down after provoking unprecedented outrage among his people for suspending efforts to bring Israel before a U.N. war crimes tribunal for its conduct during last winter's war in the Gaza Strip.

On Sunday evening, Abbas defended his decision to agree to a six-month deferral of a vote on a U.N. report alleging war crimes were committed in Gaza by both Israel and Hamas.

The vote was to have been taken earlier this month by the U.N. Human Rights Council, but was put off until March after the Palestinians withdrew their support, under what Palestinian officials said was heavy U.S. pressure.

Abbas suggested that the Palestinians had simply gone along with the prevailing view at the council. "From a position of responsibility and honesty, I say that the deferral came after an agreement between all the groups in the Human Rights Council, and after studying all positions and seeking the utmost support for

the project," he said.

Abbas noted that he's asked a committee to look into the decision-making surrounding the U.N. report. "If the committee finds any wrongdoing, any mistake in the deferral, we have the courage to take the responsibility and to say that we made a mistake," Abbas said.

However, the committee members are public figures with little clout, and it's unlikely they would issue findings considered damaging to Abbas.

In any case, the uproar over his handling of the U.N. report has already caused considerable harm to Abbas' standing. In recent days, Abbas and his aides have scrambled to repair the damage, including by asking the Human Rights Council to consider voting now, rather than in six months.

Complicating the U.S. peace mission is the deep divide between rival Palestinian governments in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. The Palestinians seek to build a state that includes both territories, located on opposite sides of Israel. □

Series of car bombs kills 19 in western Iraq

By REBECCA SANTANA,
Associated Press Writer

BAGHDAD — A spate of car bombings killed 19 people Sunday in Iraq's western Anbar province, once a hotbed of insurgency that later become a showcase for restoring peace.

The province was the scene of some of the most intense fighting by U.S. troops during the insurgency. Violence tapered off significantly after local tribes decided to align themselves with U.S. forces instead of al-Qaida in what is widely considered to be one of the key turning points of the Iraq war.

A reinvigorated insurgency in Anbar would pose a grave danger to Iraq's fragile stability as it prepares for crucial parliamentary elections early next year.

The explosions Sunday occurred in Ramadi, the capital of Anbar province about 70 miles (115 kilometer) west of Baghdad. According to a local police official, a parked car first exploded near the Anbar province police headquarters and the provincial council building.

The second car bombing took place as police and bystanders rushed to the scene to help, while a third car exploded about an hour later at the gates to the Ramadi hospital, the police official said.

Police and hospital officials spoke on condition

of anonymity because they were not authorized to speak to the media.

One bystander, Musaab Ali Mohammed, said he was buying cigarettes from a nearby shop when he heard a big explosion and saw smoke billowing out from the parking lot.

"I saw police cars and firefighters, and they started to carry out the wounded and dead. ... Minutes later, a second explosion took place," he said.

Such explosions coming in quick succession are usually designed to target rescuers and security forces who rush to the scene to assist and were a hallmark of the insurgent group, Al-Qaida in Iraq, during the height of the insurgency.

Sunday's attacks follow a bombing last week in another Anbar city, Fallujah, in which a car bomb tore through an open-air market, killing at least eight people. At least seven people were killed in late September in Ramadi when a suicide bomber slammed a tanker truck packed with explosives into a police outpost.

Iraqi officials have portrayed such attacks as limited in nature and not an indication that the insurgency is regaining its footing.

A member of the Anbar provincial council, Aefan Sadoun, told The Associated Press that Sunday's attacks "represent a limited security breach that will be fixed soon." □



Iraqi security forces inspect a damaged car after a car bomb attack in Ramadi, 115 kilometers (70 miles) west of Baghdad, Iraq, Sunday Oct. 11, 2009. A series of bombings killed at least 19 people and wounded 60 Sunday in the western Iraqi city of Ramadi, said police and hospital officials, a worrying sign that violence may be on the rise.

(AP Photo)

Dinner is grass in South Sudan after drought kills crops

by Guillaume Lavallee

LOBIRA BOMA (AFP) – In a rustic village at the foot of a steep mountain, women prepare meals by crushing dried grasses, all there is to eat after drought left over a million people in south Sudan short of food.

“You soak the herbs in water, and then eat. This is what we eat every day,” said Juspine Ifuho, showing the fine green powder collected from a hollow in the rock she uses as a mortar.

At the edge of Lobira Boma in East Equatoria state, home of people from the Latuka tribe, a valley extends all the way to the neighbouring mountains. In these remote regions of south Sudan, farmers depend mainly on rain to grow sorghum, millet and peanuts, but a severe drought in May and June ruined the summer harvest.

“We have nothing else to eat because the harvest is gone. We should buy grain at the market,

but we don’t have money,” said Pilagio Ohiasa, the village’s deputy chief, dressed in a (American Football team) Dallas Cowboys T-shirt.

The drought, price rises and the increase in tribal violence all contribute to the severe food insecurity which affects 1.5 million people in south Sudan, according to Michelle Iseminger, director of operations of the World Food Program (WFP) in South Sudan.

“Those who have cows can sell them (to buy food), but not everyone has cows,” Ohiasa said.

At the local market, there no fruits or vegetables on the stalls, only bottled water, fizzy drinks and biscuits brought over from Kenya and Uganda through torturous routes and sold at high prices.

“Eastern Equatoria used to be a food basket for all of southern Sudan, but this year is different. We don’t have anything at all,” said Dennis

Okumu, food security and nutrition officer at the Catholic Diocese of Torit.

“The main stable food crop here is sorghum and for people here without sorghum, there is nothing,” he told AFP.

The region gets an average of 360 millimetres (14 inches) of rainfall between March and September, but this year there were only 280 mm, the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) said.

“The big problem is the distribution of the rains,” explained Rogerio Bonifacio, of FAO Sudan.

A rainy April followed three parched months which destroyed the crops.

“The month of May was one of the driest in 10 or 15 years,” he said.

The vast resource-rich but underdeveloped area is blessed with fertile land. But south Sudan is still trying to recover from a devastating civil war with the north that left two million people dead by its end



A Sudanese woman grinds dry herbs eaten by locals in the village of Lobira Boma in south Sudan’s Eastern Equatoria state on October 2. In a rustic village at the foot of a steep mountain, women prepare meals by crushing dried grasses, all there is to eat after drought left over a million people in south Sudan short of food.

(AFP/File/Ashraf Shazly)

in 2005.

“South Sudan has a history of war. After the peace agreement in 2005, emphasis was placed on education and basic services. It’s only now that agricultural activities are restarting. But the systems in place are not very developed,”

said March Bloch, regional representative for the Swiss aid agency Caritas.

In Lobira Boma, residents have replanted millet and peanuts on sun-drenched land. They hope for rain... and new food aid. □




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Angels rally off Papelbon in 9th to sweep Red Sox



BOSTON (AP)—Vladimir Guerrero(notes) and the Los Angeles Angels shrugged off their postseason failures and swept the Boston Red Sox out of the playoffs. Guerrero hit a two-out, two-run single off Jonathan Papelbon(notes) in the ninth inning and the Angels rallied past Boston 7-6 in Game 3 Sunday, advancing to the AL championship series with their first postseason sweep in franchise history.

The Red Sox intentionally walked Torii Hunter(notes) with runners on second and third to bring up Guerrero, a star who had long been waiting for a big October hit. And he came through against Papelbon, who had never before allowed a run in the postseason. “That’s the biggest hit he’s had,” Angels manager Mike Scioscia said. “I think the way we did it, in a sweep, in Game 3 with two out in the

ninth, gives us momentum.” Los Angeles trailed 5-1 early, was behind 5-2 after seven innings and still down 6-4 when Papelbon retired the first two batters of the ninth. Erick Aybar(notes) singled on a two-strike pitch, Chone Figgins(notes) walked and Bobby Abreu(notes) singled in one run—the first postseason run Papelbon had allowed in 27 innings. After Hunter was walked intentionally, Guerrero, who



had one RBI in his previous 19 postseason games, singled sharply to center on the first pitch as Figgins and Abreu raced home. Major league saves leader Brian Fuentes(notes) pitched a perfect ninth for Los Angeles. Dustin Pedroia(notes) popped it up to Aybar for the final out, with the shortstop pumping his right arm even as he tracked the ball with his left. The AL West champion Angels came streaming out of the dugout. Jered Weaver(notes) joined his teammates on-field waving the jersey of Nick Adenhardt(notes), who was killed in an April car crash with a man who has been charged with drunken driving. The crowd that just one inning earlier had been primed for a celebration quietly filed out of Fenway Park for the last time in 2009, having seen the wild-card Red Sox beaten. The Red Sox had won 12 of 13 postseason games against the Angels heading into the

series, including an 11-game winning streak that dated back to Dave Henderson’s homer off Donnie Moore in the 1986 ALCS—Hendu’s shot in Game 5 sent the Red Sox to a win by the same 7-6 score. Henderson, not coincidentally, threw out the ceremonial first pitch on Sunday, even adding a little jump and twist like the one he did after he helped propel Boston to within one strike of the ’86 World Series title. Boston didn’t win it that year, but they ended their 86-year championship drought in 2004 after sweeping Los Angeles in the first round. The Red Sox swept out the Angels again in ’07 en route to a second title, and beat them in four games last year before losing to the Tampa Bay in the ALCS. Darren Oliver(notes) earned the victory after getting one out in relief, and Papelbon took his first career postseason loss. The Red Sox closer had converted seven of his previous eight postseason save opportunities. □



Americans win the Presidents Cup

Tiger Woods went 5-0



SAN FRANCISCO (AP)—Tiger Woods had a perfect week, and the Americans stayed unbeaten at home in the Presidents Cup.

Woods delivered the clinching point Sunday with a 6-and-5 victory over Y.E. Yang, who beat him in the PGA Championship. It pushed the Americans over the 17 1/2 points they needed to win the Presidents Cup with six matches still on the course.

The International team tried all week to keep it close. It had no chance in the final round of singles.

British Open champion Stewart Cink put the first point on the board by overwhelming Adam Scott, while Sean O'Hair and Anthony Kim followed with big victories of their own.

Woods went 5-0 for the week,

joining Mark O'Meara and Shigeaki Maruyama as the only players to win all five matches in the Presidents Cup. Woods now has 18 victories, the most of any player in this event.

"Did it really?" Woods said, when told by NBC Sports that his point clinched the cup. "I was trying to get my point. I was 5 up trying to make it 6. I didn't look at any boards. I just kept my head down."

U.S. captain Fred Couples was the first to greet Woods with a hug.

When he was appointed captain, Couples called Woods and jokingly asked for a big favor: Make the team so Couples wouldn't have to waste a captain's pick on him. What he didn't tell Woods were the expectations Couples had for him at Harding Park.

"I needed him—this is going to sound stupid—to go 5-0," Couples said.

Woods won all four of his team matches with Steve Stricker, who lost to Geoff Ogilvy in singles. After falling behind early in singles, Woods poured in putts and never gave Yang a chance. It was quite a change from August at Hazeltine, where Yang shocked the golfing world by rallying from two shots behind in the final round to beat Woods in the PGA Championship.

This wasn't quite the same.


"He got me there, and I figured I could get him here," Woods said. "It certainly was not exactly the same atmosphere, but then it still was an important point."




Among the few bright spots for the International team on a cold autumn afternoon was Tim Clark, who made eight birdies in 15 holes for a 4-and-3 victory over Zach Johnson.

The Americans are 5-0 on home soil in the Presidents Cup, winning the previous four times at the Robert Trent Jones Golf Club in northern Virginia. □

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Brett Favre leads Vikings to 38-10 win over Rams



ST. LOUIS (AP)—Brett Favre(notes) at 40 was plenty good enough against the St. Louis Rams.

Favre threw for 232 yards and a touchdown a day after his milestone birthday, leading the undefeated Minnesota Vikings to a 38-10 rout over the hapless and helpless Rams on Sunday.

Spry and efficient, Favre showed no signs of a letdown after beating the Packers, his former team, last week, dodging defenders and winging passes in every direction to give Minnesota its first 5-0 start in six years.

JaredAllen(notes) returned one of his two fumble recoveries 52 yards for a touchdown and Adrian Peterson rumbled in for a pair of touchdowns, helping the Vikings to their 400th win (400-322-9).

St. Louis(0-5) wore throwback uniforms from 1999, a nod to the team's only Super Bowl victory. The Rams looked nothing like the Greatest Show on Turf, bumbling their way to four turnovers and an

NFL-worst 15th straight loss. Favre, sporting pink-and-black cleats for Breast Cancer Awareness month, came out firing early, throwing for 66 yards on Minnesota's first drive to set up Peterson's 5-yard scamper around left end. Favre also hit Sidney Rice(notes) on a 47-yard

pass early in the third quarter, then connected with Visanthe Shiancoe(notes) on 13-yard touchdown pass to that put the Vikings up 24-3. Favre finished 18 for 24 with one interception.

The Rams had some nice plays on offense. They just couldn't get out of their own way.

Quarterback Kyle Boller(notes), starting for the second straight game in place of Marc Bulger(notes) (shoulder), fumbled without being hit on St. Louis' fifth play from scrimmage, the ball popping out like a half-melted ice cube to the turf. Allen, who had 4 1-2 sacks against Green Bay last week, scooped it up and ran 52 yards for a touchdown to put the Vikings up 14-0.

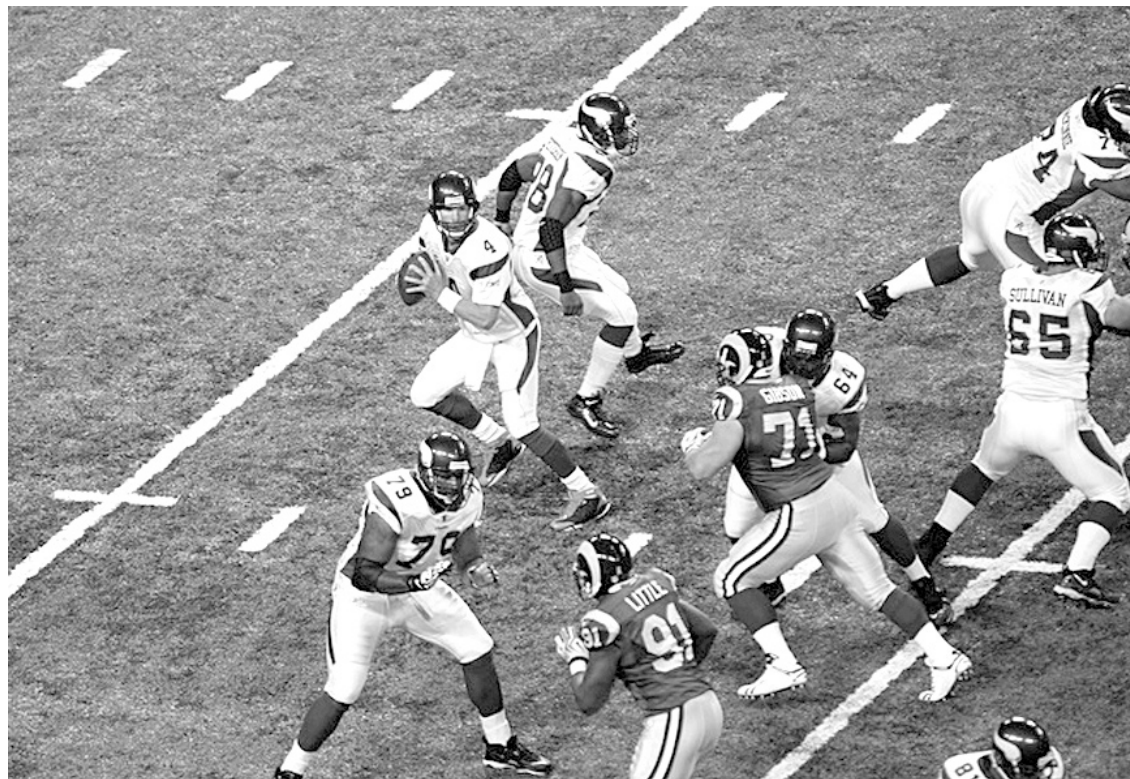
Another St. Louis drive in the

second quarter ended inside the Vikings 5-yard line, where Steven Jackson couldn't handle the exchange with Boller and Allen recovered. The Rams got to Minnesota's 10-yard line after Favre's interception, settling for Josh Brown's(notes) 29-yard field goal after Boller was dropped for a loss and threw two errant passes.

They weren't finished.

Driving late in the first half, St. Louis lost another chance to score when tight end Daniel Fells(notes) was hit from behind by Chad Greenway(notes) and coughed it up on the 2.

The Rams started the fourth quarter with another turnover. On fourth-and-6 from the Vikings 9, Tyrell Johnson(notes) intercepted



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Boller's pass in the end zone. Peterson scored at the other end from 7 yards to make it 24-3.

Boller finished 20 for 31 for 209 yards and missed the final 10 minutes after being shaken up late in the third quarter. He was replaced by Bulger, who hit Donnie Avery(notes) on a 27-yard TD pass late in the fourth quarter. □



United States clinches World Cup berth

SAN PEDRO SULA, Honduras (AP)—American players danced in the locker room and swigged some bubbly. With a thrilling victory on a hot and humid night in Central America, the U.S. soccer team earned a trip to South Africa and another chance to impress at the World Cup.

Conor Casey scored his first two international goals in the second half, Landon Donovan added another and the United States clinched its sixth straight World Cup berth with a game to spare by rallying to beat Honduras 3-2 on Saturday.

"It never gets old, that's for sure," Donovan said. "After what most of us would say was a very disappointing 2006 World Cup, we now have a chance at redemption."

In one of the most exciting end-to-end matches the U.S. has played in many years, the Americans took a 3-1 lead before Honduras closed on Julio Cesar De Leon's second goal of the game in the 78th minute.

Carlos Pavon had a chance to tie following a hand ball in the penalty area by Stuart Holden. Pavon stood over the ball ahead of his penalty kick, and U.S. goalkeeper Tim Howard worried.

"You try not to think about all the negative stuff, but it's inevitable," Howard said. "You just think, 'Where did it all go wrong?'"

Pavon put his penalty kick over the crossbar in the 87th minute. Then, 2 minutes later, he fired high on an open header.

"Thank you," Howard said to himself.

And just a few minutes later, he heard the final whistle, securing the berth. The Honduran crowd, which had been respectful during the playing of the U.S. anthem, applauded even though it was disappointed. "I was relieved. I was thankful," Howard said. "I feel like I'm in the prime of my career, and the thought went through my head this week that I certainly didn't want to miss this opportunity." Coming off a first-round elimination at the 2006 World Cup in Germany, the United States (6-2-1) is first in North and Central America and the Caribbean with 19 points and assured of one of three automatic berths that to go to the top finishers in the region. □

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Chávez dice Obama no tenía méritos para ganar el Nóbel de la Paz

CARACAS (Reuters) - El presidente de Venezuela, Hugo Chávez, criticó el otorgamiento del premio Nobel de la Paz a su colega estadounidense, Barack Obama, argumentando que el mandatario no ha hecho nada para merecer el afamado galardón. Obama, con menos de nueve meses en el poder, ganó el premio el viernes en una sorprendente decisión lo honró pero que provocó duras críticas y elogios a nivel mundial. “¿Qué ha hecho Obama para merecer este galardón? El jurado valoró, como rasgo determinante, su deseo por un mundo sin armas nucleares, olvidando su empeño por perpetuar sus batallones en Irak y Afganistán, y su decisión de instalar nuevas bases militares en Colombia”, escribió el mandatario en las “Las líneas de Chávez”

publicadas el domingo.

“Por primera vez asistimos a un merecimiento sin que el postulado haya hecho nada por merecerlo: premiar a alguien por un anhelo que está muy lejos de hacerse realidad”, agregó Chávez, quien espera que con Obama las lesionadas relaciones diplomáticas entre Caracas y Washington se normalicen. El Comité Noruego del Nobel alabó a Obama por “sus extraordinarios esfuerzos para fortalecer la diplomacia internacional y la cooperación entre los pueblos”, destacando su nuevo impulso para el desarme nuclear y su acercamiento al mundo musulmán.

El gobernante de 48 años ha sido reconocido ampliamente por mejorar la imagen internacional de Estados Unidos tras el mandato de George W. Bush de ocho



El presidente de Venezuela, Hugo Chávez, criticó el otorgamiento del premio Nobel de la Paz a su colega estadounidense, Barack Obama, argumentando que el mandatario no ha hecho nada para merecer el afamado galardón. El presidente venezolano, Hugo Chavez, habla durante una conferencia de prensa en Caracas, oct 7, 2009. REUTERS/Carlos Garcia Rawlins

años, que distanció tanto a aliados como enemigos por políticas unilaterales como la invasión a Irak, liderada por el país norteamericano

en 2003.

En tanto, el ex presidente cubano Fidel Castro describió el sábado como una “medida positiva” la concesión del

premio para Obama y dijo que compensaba “el revés” que sufrió al no ser elegida la ciudad de Chicago para los Juegos Olímpicos de 2016

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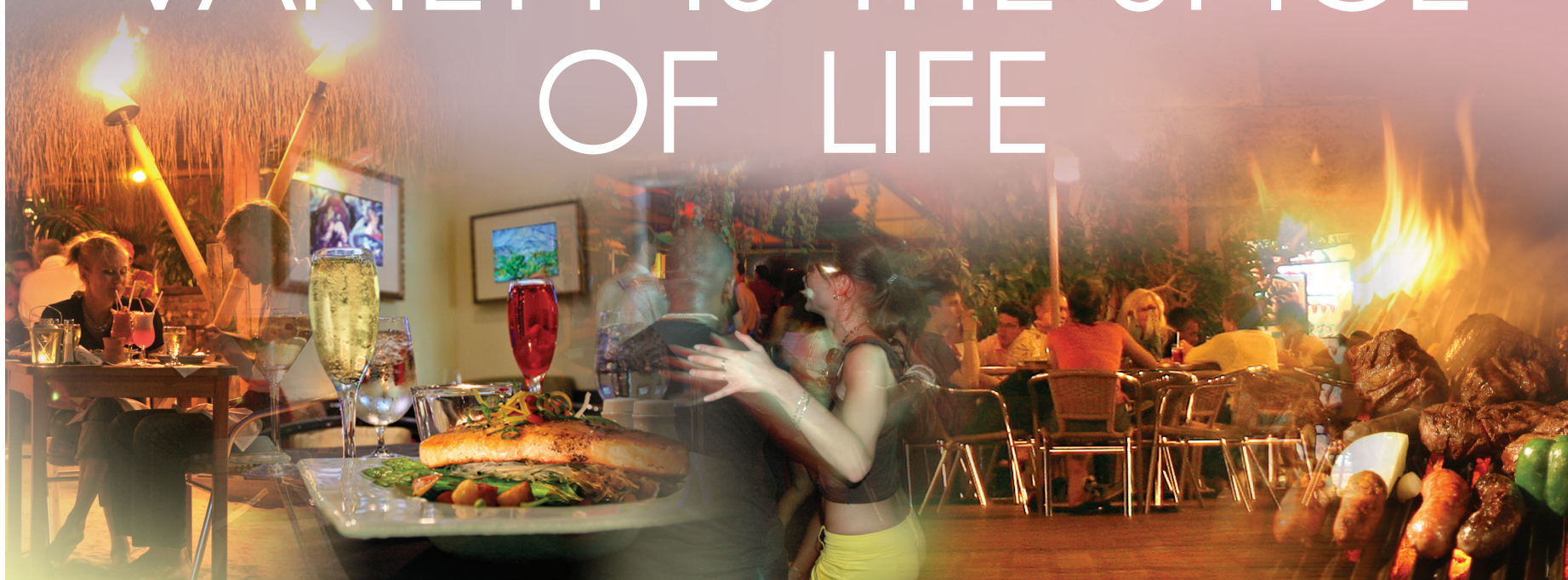
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